

*Soliloquium Anima;*

The sole-talke of the

SOVLE:

*Haemmerlein 75)*

OR,

spirituall and heavenly Dialogue,  
betwixt the Soule of  
Man and God.

Which, for the great affinitie it hath  
with other books of the Author published  
heretofore in our native  
tongue, is now  
entituled,

{ *The fourth booke of the* }  
{ *Imitation of Christ.* }

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Translated and corrected by  
THOMAS ROGERS.

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LONDON,  
Printed by H. Lownes, and R. Young.  
1628.

20  
The Holy Bible  
20 Vols.

Or  
A Spiritual and heavenly Dis-  
covery of the Holy Bible  
Man and God.



LONDON:  
Printed by A. & R. Tegg  
1828.





To the Christian  
Reader.



Being much &  
earnestly re-  
quested here-  
unto, I haue  
published in  
our vulgar tongue another of  
Malleolus, alias T. de Kem-  
pis, or Kempisius workes: not  
that (I confesse) which of some  
well weening, though not so well  
deeming persons was commen-  
ded vnto mee, I meane that  
in the old English translati-  
on, and in some Latine copies  
too, called, The fourth booke  
of the Imitation of Christ,

## To the Reader.

*which indeed is altogether De  
sacramento altaris, and so  
intituled: but the next to  
that in Kempisius workes,  
namely, the Soliloquium a-  
nimæ. This I have tearmed,  
for the great affinitie it hath  
with the bookes of Kempisius  
by mee heretofore divulged,  
The fourth booke of the I-  
mitation of Christ.*

*In the doing whereof, I have  
as little as might bee varied  
from the Authors words and  
phrases, and nowhere from the  
sense, but where himselfe hath  
varied from the truth of God,  
and, I doubt not, would have  
redressed, had hee lived in these  
dayes of light, as hee did in  
the time of most palpable blind-  
nesse.*

## To the Reader.

De And this have I done with  
nd so the greater alacritie, because I  
rt to finde ( and thou maiest reade it  
rkes, also in the Authors owne Pre-  
m a- face ) that he not only doubted  
med, that hee might utter some  
hath things both fond and offensive,  
bisius but also wished to haue some  
lged, godly corrector of his faults,  
he I. and prayed vnto Almighty  
God graciously to reueale such  
hath things offensive, either vnto  
aried himselfe, or vnto some other.

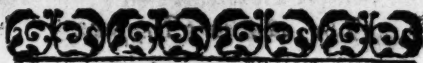
s and Whose godly prayer, God  
m the hath heard, and discovered  
hath those things for thy benefit,  
God, and testification, beside how  
hath Kempisius, the Author, how-  
these soeuer living in a popish time,  
did it was yet in heart no Papist, bus  
blind would like well of that which  
is done, as I trust thou wilt,  
And whose

## To the Reader.

whose edifying, and spiritual  
comforting, I haue onely ay-  
med at.

And reaping this comfort  
to thy soule, by the reading  
or hearing of this Treatise, be  
thankfull vnto thy God that  
giveth thee some taste of the  
celestiall ioyes in this misera-  
ble and all-troublesome world  
to whose gracious protection  
I doe most humbly commend  
thee and my selfe.

The



# THE AVTHORS

## PREFACE.

**I** Have gathered together into a little book for my comforts sake, certaine deuout sentences, the better so to commit them to memorie; I haue also disposed them as into a pleasant Orchard, set out with all sorts of trees, and beautified with all varieties of goodly flowers, wherinto I might now and then enter, both for to choose and behold at my need such matter as my heart desires for the refreshing of the minde griued at any time, and ouerwhelmed with pen-siuenesse.

Now the more cleerely, and readily to finde vnder which arbour I might repose my selfe, or which flower were best to be culled

*The Authors Preface.*

culled out, I haue made the heads of euery Chapter to glitter (as it were) with red titles. I haue likewise with varietie of words, as now talking, now reasoning, now praying, now conferring, now in mine owne, now in another mans person, bewreathed about the text with a sweet and delightfull stile.

Wherefore I intreate them whosoever shall reade it, first that they be not moued with indignation at that which the writer hath done, for it was his minde wholly to talke (with his God.) Next, that they will pardon the imperfection, and plainnesse of the stile, considering that God is more delighted with words that bee simple and pure, than with those that bee artificiall. And if happely the sense in any place appeare either not sound, or not cleare enough, my desire is to haue

*The Authors Preface.*

a godly corrector of the same, telling him withall, that what fond matter soeuer hee shall espie, it hath escaped from mee not of purpose, but rather for that I was not heedie enough in marking what I writ. Moreouer, forasmuch as man in that iudgement of his which is most probable, may bee deceiued; vnto thee O God Almighty, and Father of lights, doe I thine humble disciple make recourse, and this Sole-talk (of mine) doe present before thy diuine Maiestie, to the end that thou maist both approue the things well said, and disproue what is done amisse, and insinuate also either into my selfe, or some other faithfull seruant of thine, more rightly to obserue whatsoeuer things are offenseiue.

My request is also, holy Father, that I thy poore seruant may obtaine at thy hands both time, and  
space

*The Authors Preface.*

space to abide in the all-plenti-  
full pastures of the Scriptures,  
which bee and shall bee my chie-  
fest comfort, vntill that day of  
eternitie appeare, and the sha-  
dow of mortallitie doe decline a-  
way. And therefore withdraw  
thou from mee all vnprofitable  
cares, worldly desires, hurtfull af-  
fections, and what else may hin-  
der me from my desired leisure.  
For he must haue a free minde  
and a quiet, that would meditate  
of hidden and heavenly matters.  
Wherefore that I may bee wor-  
thy to attaine my sute, vouchsafe  
thou (my God) to endue and fill  
me with the grace of thine hea-  
venly ioy, that I may speake to  
thy glory, and to some comfort  
of my owne soule.





# The fourth booke of *the Imitation of* CHRIST.

## CHAP. I.

1. *A longing of the soule after God.*
2. *The incomprehensible maiesty of the Lord.*
3. *An exhortation to the loue of God.*

## SOURCE.



*For mee, it is good to  
draw neer vnto a God.* *Psalm 73. 2.*

O short, and O  
sweet saying, embrac-  
ing God, and aban-  
doning the vniuersall world!

What more can be said? And what  
moreouer is to be desired? Would  
not suffice if that was performed  
which now is spoken? And were o-

B

ther,

*The fourth booke*

ther, yea many other things uttered,  
should not all in the end be reduced  
vnto this one thing?

Therefore, my soule, say thou  
with the Prophet, *As for me it is good  
to draw neere vnto God*.

b Ps. 73. 28.

O my God, thou art mine onely  
c Lu. 18. 19 felicitie; thou alone art good<sup>c</sup>, and  
sweet vnto me.

To speak of thee, it delighteth the  
louer; to thinke of thee, it liketh the  
d Mat. 6. 21 religious, whose heart is not fixed  
Colos. 3. 1. 2 vpon the world<sup>e</sup>, but hidden with  
thee in the heauens, to the end that  
both thou alone maiest bee his true  
f Phil. 4. 7 peace<sup>e</sup>, and in most ioy: and he not  
vexed daily in this world, where  
false concupiscence doth prouoke

f 1. Ioh. 2.

vnto sin<sup>f</sup>.

16. O my God, how is hee affected,  
g Rom. 8. which is inflamed with thy loue<sup>g</sup>  
35. 36. &c. How doth hee reioyce, that hath  
1. Cor. 13. 4. pleasure in any vaine creature!

5. &c.

Are not these the words of such an  
man in that Psalme, whereour the  
beginning of my speech was taken  
euen these his words?

h Ps. 73. 25.

*Whom haue I in heauen but thee  
and I haue desired none in the earth  
with thee.*

MAN. O holy soule, O zealous

soule

Chap. 1. Chap. 2. 3 *Worldly things but vaine things.*  
*of the Imitation of Christ.*

uttered, soule so longing after God! What is  
educed that I heare? what is that thou saist?  
y thou Are the things both in heauen and  
is good in earth but small things in thine  
eyes?

e only SOVLE. Surely I take all things but  
c, and for trifles.

eth the MAN. What then seekest thou?  
keth the Whom would you haue without  
ot fixed these? and where will you finde him  
en with if not in these things?

end that Hath he eyther name, or place, or  
his true habitation to be sought by?

d he not Where is the place where his ho-  
where, nour dwelleth? of which in a cer-  
proude taine i Psalme thou sangest, saying:

affected O Lord, I haue loued the habitation  
y loue of thy house, and the place where thine  
hath m of thy house, and the place where thine  
re! honour dwelleth.

of such Make answer, I pray thee. For, if  
eout the thou canst, shew me him, I will goe  
as taken with thee, and wee will seeke him to-  
gether, yea, and he shall be thy God,  
and my God: and wee shall bee full  
happy when we haue found him, and  
hold him.

z thee SOVLE. Why aske you this at  
the earth mine hand? or why so curiously doe  
you enquire of this matter of mee?

zealous Think you I can or am able to vtter  
soule such things? what though gladly I

B. 2 would,

*The fourth booke*

would, conceiue nor yet, that what through the rarenesse of the thing, and the deepenesse of the mysterie, I am restrained backe?

What aske you mee? Aske them who haue both heard and seene, they are such as better can describe him whom you seeke.

But rather aske him that knoweth  
 k Psal. 94. 1. all things. For he it is of whom wee  
 3. 9. 10. speake, that both best can tell you  
 who himselfe is, yea and best declare  
 the place of his owne abode. Euen  
 IPsal. 119. 12. he it is (and none other) which re-  
 Psal. 94. 12. cherh man<sup>r</sup> knowledg, and giueth  
 1. Iam. 4. 6. his grace also to the<sup>m</sup> humble.

Make recourse vnto him which  
 reuealeth himselfe when he will, and  
 to whom hee will, neither is there  
 any beside him that can open. He  
 alone can reueale to thee what the  
 ioy is of such as loue<sup>n</sup> him, and that  
 in Mat. 11. 25. farre more excellently than I can tell  
 1. Cor. 2. 9. you.

M A N. But why speake you of  
 this wise, O holy & humble Soule  
 Thinke not that I wou'd know thee  
 of you, which neither ought to be  
 knowne, nor can be vttered. Keepe  
 your secret to your selfe: let your  
 doore still abide shut vpon you: let  
 the

Chap. 1.      5      God not perfectly knowne  
*of the Imitation of Christ.*

the scale of faith remain vncancelled,  
 neither let the vaile, for me, be remo-  
 ued from the sanctuarie.

Eate you holie bread (by your  
 selfe) in the chappell, goe into the  
 tabernacle of your house, ascend in-  
 to the vpper parlour, enter into the  
 cellar of the eternall king, or, which  
 is more noble, and soundeth more  
 sweetly, euen into the Bride chamber  
 of your celestially spouse.

I know it is written, *It is not good* p Mat. 15.  
26  
*to take the childrens bread, & to cast it*  
*to whelps.* I know this, I say, and haue  
 read it: but marke againe what fol-  
 loweth, and take pittie vpon mee, ac-  
 cording to the word of her that said, p Mat. 15.  
27  
*The whelps doe eate of the crummes*  
*which fall from their masters table.*

And therefore hide not that from  
 mee which I demand, but of the  
 greatnesse of your inward pleasures,  
 poure out euen a sparkle of the fierie  
 loue. Giue me one small drop of pre-  
 cious wine, send forth some little sa-  
 uour of the best ointment, whose  
 chiefest part and louely comfort is  
 well and vsually knowne to thee,  
 that I also may taste thereof.

Why linger you? Satisfie my de-  
 fire, and open the doore to a friend

*The fourth booke*

now at this third knocke.

O beloued, speake of the welbeloued, let not me be neglected.

If you cannot describe him rightly as he is, yet speak of him so well as you can. For indeed as hee is, who is able to describe him? Yea, who is able to conceiue the describer?

Therefore, if not, as in himselfe he is: yet tell me what thou thinkest of him. If not what to himselfe: yet utter out how good hee hath beene to thee.

For, who euer shall search forth what he is in himselfe?

Thou wilt neuer doe it, because thou hast plainly confessed, and not denied, how speaking of him,

*Ps. 139. 6.* Thy knowledge is too wonderfull for mee: it is so high that I cannot attaine unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit?

If then thou art not able to know thine owne spirit, which the Creator

*Act. 17. 25* & quickner of all spirits hath made, how at any time wilt thou know him which is vncreated? Did not this

*Ps. 35. 10.* make thee all amazed to say, O Lord who is like unto thee?

Notwithstanding, of all friendship, by some similitude describe him, whose essence thou hast not yet attained

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

rained vnto: Neither is it for you to denie to show him in part, whom you thinke cannot wholly be reuealed.

S. I must needs say you are too curious, and importune vpon me. Thou searchest all my priuities, and lettest in thine hand into the secrets of my chamber.

I sent thee vnto him, and comcest thou againe vnto me? Seeke you me, or him?

But I pray you, of what spirit art thou? Be still I beseech thee, & trouble mee not. For whom thou seekest, he is aboue me.

M. But can hee that seeketh after God, so easily giue ouer? Protraet not to speake, for you may comfort me forth-with. How long will you keepe mee in suspence? What, doe you say and vn say?

As I liue I will not giue ouer, except you blesse mee. For I count it a blessing, if thou show mee thy God.

Now therefore if thou hast seene him, tell mee plainly, and I will take him vpon my shoulders

S. I know thou hast a great desire, and a loue vnto the creator;

*The fourth Booke*

But a great thing is it which you require at mine hands, and such a thing as I am in doubt whether it may be done or no.

He whom thou seekest, knoweth it right well: for it is not in mee to let thee know so much.

Your demand seemeth vnto mee to bee like that of the Spouse which  
 ¶ Can. 8. 1. 6 in the songs did<sup>x</sup> say:

*Shew mee, O thou, whom my soule  
 loueth, where thou feedest.*

Wilt thou then learne of me who this is, or what good hee hath done with mee? Doubtlesse it is not in mee to show you.

But you are not content, neither his  
 ¶ 1 King. 8. greatnesse, who exceedeth the y<sup>e</sup> hea-  
 27. uens, can deterre you, nor my weak-  
 nes, which in his eyes am nothing,  
 make you to desist.

Why hast thou laide this burden  
 vpon mee? I am not able to tell thee,  
 vntill I goe into the sanctuarie of  
 ¶ Ps. 73. 17. x God, and vnderstand the same.

Why are you so desirous to know that which may not be vttered?

M. And will you not? Oh, how faine would I bee instructed! For those things we are most earnest to know, which the most hardie may bee  
 reuea-



*of the Imitation of Christ.*

reuealed.

Notwithstanding, once againe I pray you bee not so hard, as altogether to be silent.

Thinke not that forthwith I will vtter what you shall say, vnto our enemye. I will keepe your saying as a friend, yea as a very friend ought to doe.

You may boldly tell mee your minde secretly. Lo we two be heere alone: neyther I with lightnesse nor you with arrogancie are delighted, but in him which hath giuen vs vnderstanding, euen of him will wee speake.

And if happely he come while we are talking, let vs giue place, and let him be betweene vs. If he vouchsafe to speak, let vs heare him gladly, and be silent till he haue done. At which time you shall not be bound to satisfie my demands: for when hee speaketh all flesh must be still.

S. This couenant I like well. Only let him be with vs, and bee wee carried vnto our secret places. Let him be the guide of our speech, and conduct vs whither our delight is to goe.

This beloued of whom you so

B. 5

dili-

*The fourth Booke*

diligently enquire, is for his greatness<sup>a</sup> vnspeakeable, for his height<sup>b</sup> and glory<sup>b</sup> incomprehensible, for his strength and magnificence<sup>c</sup> infinite.

<sup>a</sup> Pf. 139. 6.  
<sup>b</sup> Iob 9. 10.  
<sup>c</sup> Pf. 8. 1, 2.

Whatsoever is either spoken or written of him commeth far behinde his Maiestie, because in glory hee excelleth all things.

The heauens haue said, He hath ouerpasse, ascended, and preuailed

<sup>d</sup> 2. Chro. 6. 13.

Or<sup>d</sup> vs.

The earth hath answered, If the heauens, and the heauen of heauens doe not comprehend him, aske not me of<sup>e</sup> him.

<sup>e</sup> Psal. 139. 7, 8, &c.

The starres haue sung, Wee are darkenesse and not light, vnlesse hee inlighten<sup>f</sup> vs.

<sup>f</sup> Gen. 1. 12. &c.

Pf. 139. 12.

The sea trembled, and said, Hee is not in mee, and the deepe knoweth him not.

Heare you what they say?

M. I heard, and was sore troubled at their voice my very lips trembled.

S. What then will become of thee if we should aske him? Let vs speake vnto him.

O Lord, art thou hee of whom the Prophets haue prophesied, and whose commandment all things in their seasons doe obey?

Verily

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

great-  
height  
for his  
finite.  
or writ-  
nde his  
excel-

Verily, I am that I am, and be- **G O D.**  
sides me there is none other <sup>h</sup> God : <sup>g</sup>Exod. 3. 14.  
I am the beginning & the <sup>i</sup> ending : <sup>h</sup>Deut. 4.  
I am the <sup>k</sup> Creator, and the Gouver- <sup>35.</sup>  
neur <sup>l</sup> of all things. I liue, saith the <sup>Psal. 18. 31.</sup>  
Lord, and I will reigne for euer and <sup>Esa. 45. 21.</sup>  
euer. <sup>i</sup> Reuel. 18.  
<sup>k</sup> Esa. 42. 5.  
<sup>Aa. 17. 24.</sup>  
<sup>I</sup> Heb. 1. 3.  
<sup>Ioh. 5. 17.</sup>

le hath  
euailed

Now little worme, what sayest  
thou being inuironed with such  
light ?

, If the  
neauens  
aske not

Loe, thy beloued, whom thou **S O V L E.**  
thoughtest was with mee, speaketh  
vnto thee.

Wee are  
lesse hee

Hee was with mee when I <sup>m</sup> said, <sup>m</sup>Ps. 73. 28.  
For mee it is good to draw neere vnto  
**G O D.**

d, Hee is  
knoweth

Hee will be with thee, if thou also  
wilt <sup>n</sup> say, My soule refuse: <sup>b</sup> comfort : <sup>n</sup>Ps. 77. 2.  
the day of miserie I desire <sup>o</sup> not, for <sup>o</sup>Ier. 17. 16.  
thou art my king and my <sup>p</sup> God. <sup>p</sup>Psal. 5. 2.

? roublede  
rembled  
e of thee  
t vs speak

Bee not like to raging louers, but  
loue **G O D** alone, seeke him alone,  
which admitteth no companion of  
the world into his fellowship.

of whom  
fied, and  
things in

Talke thou onely with him, and  
though he depart, leauing the roome  
void, beare all things patiently. For  
his wont is to goe and come, to  
proue his friend, and make him  
perfect.

Verily

*The fourth booke*

perfect in louing.

If thou desire his presence, beare his absence patiently. Waite, and waite againe, hee will depart for a while, and after a while will againe returne.

Loue maketh thee thus affected, which now heaueth thee on high, & straight way flingeth to the ground againe.

His loue is than all floures sweeter, than lilies fairer, & brighter than the precious stones.

For no creature is to be preferred before the loue of God, and therefore for that euery thing is to be despised.

9. Mat. 10.

37.

2. Mat. 16.

26.

Luk. 9. 25.

So-soone as I was touched inwardly with his loue, I forthwith began so to be inflamed in my minde, that bidding adieu to all things in the world, I onely wished for his most pure embracements, and, as it were bearing hot coles out of a burning Ouen, I vttered these words which

Ps. 73. 25.

26.

but few doe vse.  
Whom haue I in heauen but thee, and I haue desired none in the earth with thee. God is the strength of mine heart, and my portion for ever.

By these gather now of thy befo-

ned

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

ued, what manner a one and what he is, which incomprehensibly exceedeth all the things which are & haue being.

And although he can neyther by words be vttered, nor conceiued in minde, because hee is infinite: yet is he very louely, tractable, fellowly, & to be intreated, insomuch as though he cannot be comprehended, yet after a strange maner hee may be loued. Iob 23. 8.

For by loue hee is taken, yea by loue fast bounden: but by desire he is sought, by prayer knocked at, and by hope attained.

If as yet I haue not satisfied you, let him, whom you haue sought, satisfie you, and teach you, about all teachers, to finde himselfe.

Chap.

*The fourth booke*

## Chap. 2.

1. Of God his distinct iudgement  
at the end of this world. 2. The cursed  
state of the ungodly.



Put mine heart unto  
thee, O Lord, that I  
may feare, thy holy  
Name.

<sup>a</sup> Ps. 86. 11.

O my God, thou  
art much to be lo-  
ued, yea, and to

<sup>b</sup> Ps. 96. 4. be feared much thou <sup>b</sup> art.

Hee that loueth, let him bee glad:  
but hee that loueth not thee, let  
him quake and feare. But he which  
neither doth feare thee, nor loue  
thee, is vtterly foolish, and franticke.

For, *It is a fearefull thing to fall into*

<sup>c</sup> He. 10. 31. thy <sup>c</sup> hands.

And, *who knoweth the power of thy*  
<sup>d</sup> Ps. 90. 11. *wrath?* Or, *who may abide the day*  
<sup>e</sup> Mal. 3. 2. *of thy comming unto <sup>e</sup> iudgement?*

For, thy roaring shall bee like a  
<sup>f</sup> Eze. 5. 39. *Lion:* and thy glittering sword like  
a consuming fire

At the sound of thy voice all the  
dwellers in the world shall bee mo-  
ued, and when thou comest, all  
the foundations of the earth shall  
shake.

Chap. 2. 15 Gods wrath is vaportable.  
*of the Imitation of Christ.*

shake.

g. 2. Pet. 3. 7.  
Reu. 6. 14.

V Who then but will feare? or by  
what meanes can any escape thine  
hands?

If a man will hide himselfe vpon  
the strong rock, thou wilt thunder  
thereupon, and it shall rend asunder.

h Ps. 139. 7.  
8. & c.  
i Isai. 2. 19.  
20. & c.

And if he lurke in caves or moun-  
taines, hee shall be plucked out and  
be made to sustaine thy displeasure,  
because hee cared not for thy fa-  
uour.

k Hos. 10. 3.  
Luk. 23. 30.  
l Reu. 6. 16.  
17.  
Reu. 9. 6.

Surely there is no place which  
can hide man from thy presence.

m Iob 23.

For all things are naked and open  
in thine eyes: thou seest the heart  
and the reins, and beholdest the  
most secret affections of the thought,  
so that no secret is hid from thine  
eyes.

n Psal. 139. 7.  
8. & c.  
o Heb. 4. 13  
o Psal. 7. 9.

O how terrible wilt thou bee to  
sinners, & to the hearts that be har-  
dened, which now doe glorie in  
ill doing, and triumph in wicked-  
nesse, saying, The Lord seeth not, bee  
will not regard?

p Eccles. 23.  
19. 20.  
q Pro. 1.  
24. 25. & c.  
r Ps. 10. 11.  
s Psal. 94. 7.

They are so puffed vp with vaine  
words, as though thou wouldest ne-  
uer come: yea, they turne away  
their eyes, that they may not see the  
end.

But

*The fourth Booke*

t Mat. 24. 44. u Lu. 22.35 But in the houre that they thinke not thou wilt <sup>t</sup> come, and they shall be taken in the snares <sup>u</sup> of their own wickednesse. And as theeues & robbers being suddenly taken are confounded: so shall they be put to confusion at their due time.

x Pro. 1.26 27,28.&c. Then wilt thou haue them in derision which now deride thy <sup>x</sup> seruants, and euill shall be rendred vnto such as haue abhorred thy righteousness.

Now they stop their eares vnto thy voyce, but the time shall come when they shall cry and not be heard.

y Mat. 25. 41. Now they turne thy word into a fable, but themselues shall be turned then into a flame of <sup>y</sup> fire. For thy word shall goe out with a horrible blast, and it shall strike the wicked and vnbeleeuers without all mercie.

z 1. Cor. 15 32. a Mat 24. 31. b 1. Thes. 4 36. What will the proude person say then so puffed vp with knowledge, and swelling in power? What answer will hee make, when the last trumpe shall sound in his <sup>z</sup> eares? When thou Lord our God shalt appear <sup>a</sup> in Maiesty, together with thine Angels <sup>b</sup> and Archangels.

Then



Then all the vngodly deriders of  
 any word shall bee hushd: and they  
 which haue molested thy seruants,  
 ricken with an horrible feare.

Wisd. 5.2  
 3. & 6.

Then shall they vtterly bee con-  
 founded, which laying a good con-  
 science and honestie aside, gaue  
 themselves to vanitie and wanton-  
 esse.

They shall suffer punishment then,  
 which haue loosed the bridle vnto  
 the flesh.

Then shall they roare towards hea-  
 ven, which now are cunning in vaine  
 iusticke and daunces.

Then shall that bee turned into  
 mourning, which hath been contra-  
 ded by inordinate pleasure.

They shall be bound vp in bundles  
 together to be burned <sup>d</sup> then, which <sup>d</sup> Mat. 13.  
 haue beene companions together at  
 drunkenesse and belly-cheere. And  
 whom loue haue bound in wicked-  
 nes, the reuenging fire shall roule to-  
 gether in torments.

O ye foolish, and wretched, O yee  
 antike and blinde louers of the  
 world, what doe yee, what is your  
 meaning? how will yee escape the  
 vengeance of the Lord?

Why for a little pleasure which  
 you

*The fourth booke*

you do loue, do ye hasten vnto eu-  
lasting torments? Why feare yee not  
hell, which doe so feare a little pen-  
nance? And, you which flie the death  
of the flesh, why aforehand doe ye  
not take heed of the eternall death  
of the soule?

Vnlesse therefore yee doe conuert  
& repent, ye shall neuer escape these  
horrible and fiery torments of Gods  
displeasure.

When I consider the day & hour  
of the generall iudgement, my bones  
doe shake for feare, because intreat  
then shall not turn away the wrath

• A&. 10. 42

• 2. Tim. 4. 8.

• Heb. 12. 23.

God, but he will be a righteous iudg-  
er to all.

O God most holy, mightie, and  
mercifull Sauour, saue me from this  
bitter death, and giue me grace to re-  
pent, that I may vnfainedly bewail  
my finnes before I depart out of this  
present world.



CHA

CHAP. 3.

1. *An humble confession of finnes.*
2. *With a prayer for grace  
to repent.*



*Y* sorrow is ever be-  
fore <sup>a</sup> me.

<sup>a</sup> Ps. 38. 17.

O my G O D,  
fondly haue I  
spotted my life  
wth manifold sins:  
but O Lord be-

hold my teares which I shed before  
thee, because I haue so much offen-  
ded thine holinesse.

For I know that in mee, that is, in  
my flesh, dwelleth no good <sup>b</sup> thing, <sup>b</sup> Ro. 7. 18.  
and that so long as I carry about a  
mortall body, I am not free from  
wickednesse.

I therefore doe sinne, and offend  
day by day, &, which is more lamen-  
table, I suffer many sins to passe away  
without sorrow & due repentance.

For being busie most commonly,  
and encombred with affaires of the  
world, & vaine curiousnes, I am not  
able so speedily to returne vnto  
wholesome teares. Whereof it is that  
the darknesse of sinne doth increase  
so

so mightily against mee, the which  
both stop vp the fountaine of grace,  
and hinder the streames of heavenly  
comfort from comming vnto me.

L O R D. And is that a small of-  
fence?

S O V L E. No my God, it is a  
great sinne, and so much the grea-  
ter, as it passeth the sooner from the  
heart, and doth not pricke mee with  
sorrow.

But, Lord, wilt thou not regard  
this my wicked dealing? How long  
shall I delude thee, and thus deceive  
my selfe?

Wilt thou alway be silent? where  
is thy rod? where is thy spur? where  
is thy wand?

O Lord, why dost thou withdraw  
thy iudgement, and the paines of hell  
from mine eyes?

Were these things alwaies in my  
remembrance, could I bee so retche-  
lesse?

Thy silence and patience is for  
mine<sup>d</sup> amendment: but if I still bee  
negligent, wilt thou not then punish  
me<sup>e</sup> severely? Surely thou wilt punish  
me, if not in this world, yet in the  
world to come.

For nothing shall passe away vnto  
renewed,

<sup>d</sup> Wisd. 11.

<sup>20.</sup>

<sup>e</sup> Pet. 3. 9.

<sup>e</sup> Wisd. 12.

<sup>10.</sup>

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

which reuenged, neither smal, neither great  
 grace, offence.

But much better heere in this  
 world, where both weeping is pro-  
 fitable, the paine is short, the satisfac-  
 tion more accepted, and reconcila-  
 ment sooner had.

And therefore spare not the rod,  
 but with a sharpe water annoint  
 mine eyes, and reserue not my sinnes  
 vntill the time to come, lest then I  
 bee deliuered vnto the tormentors  
 vntill I haue paid the vtmost ffar- fMat. 5. 26.  
 thing.

Better it is now a little for my  
 profit to be pricked, than hereafter  
 to feele the bitter paines of hell Purgatory.  
 fire.

Wherefore I am to mourne, and  
 to conceiue a great sorrow for my  
 sinnes.

For many things I haue to bewaile,  
 but no cause at all to laugh.

The darkenesse of mine heart, the  
 slipperinesse of my conscience, my  
 pronenesse vnto wickednes, my want  
 of grace, doe with mee, yea rather of  
 necessitie doe enforce me to weepe  
 and to lament.

Furthermore, the remembrance  
 of manifold temptations, and of as-  
 faults

*The fourth booke*

faults to finde, should make me haue but  
little lust to be merry.

Spare me, O Lord, spare me.

For though I weepe, beeing touch-  
ed inwardly with sorrow, it is no  
maruell, because the time is now to  
weepe.

O happy is the houre, when I con-  
ceiue sorrow for my sinnes! Blesse  
are the teares which doe flow from  
the grieve of heart, at the considera-  
tion of the foulness of a guilty con-  
science.

And who is able to sound the bot-  
tom of this depth, and to reprove the  
hidden filthinesse without feeling?

g Ioh. 1. 9.

O my God, the true & light, thou  
canst lighten all the obscure places  
of mine heart, yea and burne vp all  
the spots thereof, in the spirit of heat  
and iudgement.

h Psal. 51.  
10.

It is in thee to giue a new heart,  
create a new spirit, and there to pre-  
pare a secret habitation, that it may  
be a place for thee to rest in, and  
tabernacle of thy Name, which are  
the louer of cleanness, & the gues-  
t of a good conscience.

But forsomuch as willingly thou  
doest not visite a disordered house  
but

But commonly leauest the same to  
bee illuded with beastly affections, I  
am the more carefull lest that betide  
me.

But helpe me, O mercifull & gra-  
tious God, to repaire the ruines of  
this mine house.

Woe to him from whom thou  
departest away offended. But peace  
to him vnto whom thou descendest,  
and with whom thou abidest.

I miserable wretch now placed in  
the midst of snares, and loaden with  
the shackles of wickednes, what coun-  
sell is best for me, or what remedie to  
be vsed, but only to lift vp mine hea-  
uie eyes vnto thee, that my crie may  
be heard in the heauens?

For a polluted conscience shall ne-  
uer finde or haue a better medicine,  
than bitterly to slay it selfe in pray-  
er. And how can extreame tentation  
more profitablie be cured that it pre-  
uaile not, than by powring continual  
petitions vnto thee, & by humbling  
our selues?

But who can giue mee these blef-  
sings? I meane to pray and to weepe  
as I ought to doe. Where may I  
attaine

*The fourth booke*

attaine that humilitie, and abundance of teares? Doubtlesse of the  
i Ps. 130. 7. Lord, with whom is<sup>i</sup> mercie, and  
great redemption.

O Lord, my God, the giuer of a  
i Lam. 1. 17. grace, grant that I may, as I am  
bound, bewaile mine offences, seeme  
they neuer so small, and to amend  
without vaine excuses, as well those  
offences which are secret, as those  
that are well knowne.

Let this mine heartie repentance  
get me thy fauour again, and prepare  
vnto well doing, and to that which  
tendeth vnto saluation.





## of the Imitation of Christ.

## CHAP. 4.

I. A lamentation of the soule for her  
weakenes and unstaiednes in the  
race of vertue.

Hine eyes did see mee  
when I was without  
forme.

a Psal. 139.

16.

O Lord my God,  
what in the end will  
become of mee, seeing daily I doe  
offend?

When shall I amend my life as I  
ought to doe? When will it bee bet-  
ter with mee? When shall I waxe  
strong? And when shall I ouer-  
come?

I am cast head-long into the deep  
of filchinesse. Who can thinke  
there is yet hope left to rise againe,  
to amende, to goe forward, and to  
come vnto the end? Surely, tou-  
ching my selfe I am out of all hope:  
that mine hope were stronger in  
mee.

I greatly do despaire, because my  
weakenesse encreaseth through long  
troubles: and I see no end of my  
griew, and sinne.

C

And

*The fourth booke*

And though I say, Loe now I will  
begin to amend: loe it is now time,  
I will doe my best to reforme my  
self, straight-way, alas, sinne standeth  
before mee, the enimie listeth vp  
himselſe against mee, and wicked  
custome keepeth mee backe with  
might and maine, contrarie to my  
minde.

O Lord, behold how I am cast  
downe and trodden vnder foot: be-  
hold the troubles which I doe in-  
dure.

Lift vp thy right hand, and deliuer  
mee from my persecutors, for they  
**b Ps. 142. 6.** are too strong for <sup>b</sup> me.

My wisdom is perished, and my  
strength hath failed me.

Mine arme is broken, neither can  
**a Ps. 44. 6** my sword save <sup>c</sup> me.

I see not vnto whom I may flie,  
and that will receiue and heale mee,  
I know none.

Thou alone continuest my refuge:  
but I dare not approach for shame,  
because I haue offended thee.

I haue sinned O God, forgie me.  
I am sorie, yea heartily sorie that e-  
uer I did transgresse thy lawes.

Giue mee that which seemeth  
right in thine eyes, and bee merciful  
full.

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

full.

Thou diddest iustly in forsaking mee, and iustly thou diddest commit mee into the hands of mine aduersarie.

But Lord, remember that which thou hast made, amend that which is decayed, for of it selfe it can neuer stand.

Marke my groaning, and my troubles: let the paine and grieve of mine heart at no time bee out of thy remembrance.

O mercifull Father, cast an eye vpon my thraldome and imprisonment, vpon the misery and crueltie which I doe indure, and bring mee out that am bound, from the prison house, and wretched bondage.

Though a man should liue many yeeres, what will hee bee the better thereby? And who knoweth whether he shall amend his wicked life, or be worse and worse?

Man woteth not how hee shall proceed, and end: and his continuance is very doubtfull, because of the manifold chances of euils, and dangerous tentations.

Manie at their first conuersion from sinne, are good and humble,

C 2

which

*The fourth booke*

which afterward become forward and rebellious. At the first they were modest and deuout, zealous and silent, and in the end proued carelesse, and dissolute, babblers, & barbarous. And they which at the beginning did bridle their wicked affections, at the length had scarce any care at all either what they said or did. And so by little and little, wickedness taketh root, and increaseth, while it is not preuented at the beginning.

Who therefore but should feare and be circumspect, seeing such vnluckie chances doe come vnto the good and modest?

Againe, who thoroughly doe know whether he be elected, or haue strength to beare all things?

U. A. 14.

101.

2. 1. Pe. 1. 7.

We are to bee tried <sup>d</sup>, and who is sure that he shall not be burned, seeing temptation is a fire <sup>e</sup>?

So that all must feare, and hope like of the better: but none is rash to presume, nor yet proudly to be secure.

1. Pro. 17. 3.

Indeede the gold which is tried shall be preserued: but I aduice the O man, to consider wel of what thou art.

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

The celestially purger will purge,  
he wil fine the sonnes of Leui 8, euen  
all that are his seruants <sup>h</sup>. Mal. 3. 3.  
h 2 Tim. 3.  
12.

It is not alwaies gold, which hath  
the colour of gold: neither is it al-  
way stubble, or naughty siluer, which  
endureth beating, and beareth the  
snaile. For God beholdeth the very  
conceitings and the hearts <sup>i</sup>, by them Psal. 7. 9  
most commonly working wonders,  
which in the opinion of many, are  
cast awayes.

O Lord God, what ioy can I haue  
in this world, when I think vpon the  
uncertaintie <sup>h</sup>, and frailtie of all k 2 Pet. 3. 7  
Psal. 102.  
25. 26.  
things vnder heauen?

Notwithstanding, this am I sure  
of, that thou art good, and that thy  
mercy is from generation to genera-  
tion on them that feare thee <sup>i</sup>. Luk. 1. 50.

For thine infinite goodnesse and  
mercie, is greater than all my finnes.

And this shall bee my comfort,  
while thou giuest me space  
to amend my  
life.

## The fourth booke

## CHAP. 5.

1. Of the shortnesse and miserie of this present life. 2. A prayer for grace to renounce the world, and the vanities of the same.

a Job 14. 4.

b Heb. 11.

c 1. Tim. 6.

d Job 1. 21.



Erme vnderstand the shortnes of my daies. So long as I am in this world, I am wicked: and while I continue vpon the earth, I am poore, a stranger, and a pilgrime.

I brought nothing into the world, and certain it is I can carry nothing thereout: for naked came I out of my mothers wombe, & naked shall I returne thither againe.

As a shadow which passeth away, and as a feather which is tossed vpon downe with the wind: and as a gnat of one night, so suddenly shall I pass away.

All the time wee haue heere liue, is but as the shortest night. Few and euill are my dayes, and after a little while they shall end, and bee as though they had never been.

e Ge. 47. 9.

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

beene.

And when man is dead, what is in man but filthines? Who will haue any care of a stinking carcas? Or who will inquire of the absent being dead? whereas being alieue he was accounted of.

A small while is man remembred either of his friends or of strangers: but vndoubtedly the righteous shall be had in euerlasting remembrance, f Psal. 112. 6. because hee shall bee euerlastingly linked to GOD, who is alwaies the same, and shall neuer die. g Psal. 102. 27.

Therefore happie is he which putteth no trust in man; nor yet reioyceth in any worldly thing, but hath his heart fixed in <sup>h</sup>heauen: for what neuer is in this world, is transitorie: and vaine. h Psal. 2. 12. i 2. Pet. 3. 7. Psal. 102. 25. 26.

Call into thy minde those which thou hast liued since the world began, i. Cor. 7. 31. Ioh. 2. 17. till now, and tell, I pray thee, where they bee. And those whom thou see and heare to liue now, how long thinkest thou will they indure? Say therefore of all, Euerie man that liueth, is but <sup>k</sup>vanitie. k Psal. 39. 7.

O miserable and wretched life!

*The fourth booke*

O fraile, and lamentable life, which good men doe suffer rather than desire: & wicked men, albe they desire it, yet can they not long inioy the same!

Oh, vanitie of this world, when wilt thou haue an end? when wilt thou cease?

Yet the time will come, when all the elect shall bee sette free from the  
[Rom. 8. 22] bondage of corruption<sup>1</sup>, though now  
23. they doe lament, because they are estranged from the kingdome of  
[Psal. 1. 23] Christ<sup>m</sup>.

Would to God, the whole world would euen wither vp in mine heart, and my Lord God, euen mine immortal spouſe, seem sweet vnto my soule!

Vndoubtedly, the fleeting ioy of this present life, is but a false and a most bitter potion. Let them drinke thereof that list, for afterward they shall feelee a most bitter flixe. And the more one hath drunk therof, the sharper shal his torments be, because the whole pleasure of this world shal more speedily passe away than the winde<sup>n</sup>, and leaue to their louers  
[Wise. 8. 9. & c.] paines and burnings<sup>o</sup>.

[Lu. 16. 25]

Therefore out of my sight thou  
deceipt



*of the Imitation of Christ.*

deceitfull glorie of the world, and  
all foolish pleasure of the flesh.

Many you doe draw, and decciue:  
but in the end you leaue and destroy  
them p.

p 1 Ioh. 2.  
15. 16. 17.

Woe to them which belecue thee:  
woe be to them that are there drown-  
ed.

But come, and come nigh mee,  
most holy humilitie: and the full re-  
nouncing of all worldly pompes: and  
neuer doe thou leaue me, O thou  
sweete remembrance of my present  
pilgrimage.

What am I but ashes, and earth q? q Eccles.  
and whither tende I, but towards 10. 9.  
earth r Gen. 3. 19.

Oh, how wretched am I become!  
how iustly may I lament, when I  
think vpon my pilgrimage f, & how f Heb. 11. 13.  
little I am priuite how I shall end the  
same.

If I liue well, and continue so,  
there is no cause why I should feare  
an euill death. But who can glorie  
of a good life, and of a pure consci-  
ence? He which knoweth himselfe  
to bee such a one, let him reioyce in  
the Lord t, and take compassion vp- t 1 Cor. 1. 3.  
on me a sinner.

To liue I haue no desire u, because u Phi. 1. 23.

*The fourth booke*

miserie inuironeth me on euery side: to die, an euill conscience is afraid: for to answer God, it hath not one

xIob 9.3. for a <sup>x</sup> thousand.

The Prophet was not so in feare  
y Ps. 108.1. which <sup>y</sup> said, *Mine heart is prepared  
O God, my heart is prepared.*

O Lord, the God of my saluation, let my life come vnto a good end: and prolong not the daies of my lamentation. With sorrow I came into this prison, and without griefe I shall not get out.

S. Long doe I thinke this life, and the rather, because of the continuall misery and troubles which I finde therein: but in truth it is not long for it passeth away more swiftly than

2Iob 9.25. a <sup>x</sup> Poste.

To a man that liueth in paine and  
a Eccles. 4.1. misery, all time is <sup>a</sup> long, and he  
2. counteth a day for a yeere. This maketh my life tedious vnto mee, and so much the more it doth trouble mee, as the more truly I consider all the miseries of the same.

But, if happily any consolations and ioy come betweene, it standeth mee vpon to looke about whether they be of God, or no. If they be

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

God, I accept them gladly, but  
 I know not how long they will  
 continue: yet how short soeuer  
 they bee, they like and please mee  
 well.

But, would to God hee would  
 poure them largely vpon mee: and  
 cause them to continue with mee a  
 long while.

But the ioyes and pleasures which  
 are not of God, are vile and fading,  
 albeit to the shew they appear sweet  
 and pleasant.

Thus, euen thus passeth away  
 his life, replenished continually  
 with good and euill things.

Therefore, so long as I liue in this  
 world, I am a poore<sup>b</sup> pilgrime.

I cannot truely say I haue enough,  
 because presently there is satietie  
 of no good<sup>c</sup> thing: but the good<sup>c</sup>  
 thing which I looke for, thou<sup>d</sup> art,  
 in whom I belecue.

So that when thy glory hath ap-  
 peared, and replenished mee, then,  
 euen then I will acknowledge, that  
 I haue enough. But in the meane  
 while, because this word is hidden  
 from mee, much grieve and sorrow  
 doth inuiron my soule.

And therefore being mindfull  
 of

b Heb. 11.

13.

c Eccles. 1. 8

d Psal. 119.

57.

*The fourth booke*

Mat. 26.

38.

of thine holy saying, I repeate this  
often times, *My soule is very heauie*  
*euē vnto the death.*

Well were it with me, if this hour  
were come, and that neither grief  
nor sorrow did possesse me.

But, Lord, I beseech thee, let thy  
goodnes conserue me.



Chap.

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*of the Imitation of Christ.**Chap. 6.*

1. *An ardent desire of the soule to be loosed from sinne, and from the troubles of this world.*



*Ring my soule out of prison a.* aPsa. 142.7

The greatnesse of my sorrow will not suffer me to be still.

For why doe I yet liue in this world? I know not what I canne do here.

Slowly, God he knoweth, I goe forward in vertue: nay would to God I went not backward.

O Lord, what a pleasure shouldest thou doe mee, if speedily thou wouldest take me out of this life, that a worser thing come not vnto me b.

My life, alas, sigheth in paine, and in wel-doing amendeth not.

If thou looke for my connerfion, I repent not by the same, but doe abuse thy long suffering: if thou punish mee, I doe hardly shew patience, because thou pursuest dry  
sube

*The fourth booke*

c. Iob 13.25 c stubble.

Why then dost thou not quite take away thy seruant? Why doe I liue vpon the earth? that is, why doe I dwell among good people, & yet reforme not my life and manners? Why, so vnworthily and dangerously keepe I the place of some better person, and yet walke so carelesly and so coldly in this life?

Thus poure I out this woful thing which I consider of, in the eares of my God.

Yet, gracious Lord, cry not out in thine anger against me, *Cut downe the tree, and cast it into the fire.*

a Luk. 13.7

I accuse mine infirmitie before thee, that I may finde grace in thy sight through my confession.

It is my part to accuse: but it belongeth vnto thee to shew c. mercy. It is my part to weepe and to sigh bitterly: but it belongeth vnto thee Lord, mercifully to comfort.

e Dan. 9.9.

Wherefore, my Lord and God, either giue mee more grace in this life, or take mee speedily out of this world, that the rent bee not worse.

For, to liue long, and not to cease from

from ill liuing, is but to augment the punishment of hell.

Neither can I away with such a life as knoweth neither how to proceede in vertue, nor to bewaile wickednesse.

For that partie which leadeth an holy and righteous life, is grieved at the heart whensoever hee offendeth, and that hee may in grace and vertue increase more and more, it is alwaies his desire.

What shall hee doe which knoweth himselfe daily to offend: and that his flesh grievously doth rise against the spirit? who also being overcome with reidioutnesse sometime, and cooled with negligence and idlenesse, doth giue ouer to resist, or else laying aside the spirituall weapons doth follow the swinge of the flesh, whither his owne will doth draw him. Eph. 6. 11.

Alas, Lord and God, such a one alas draweth nigh vnto the gates of death, and liuing in the flesh, runneth into the death of the soule.

Oh, how is euery one to take heed, that he be not seduced and supplanted of the enemy?

No man is sure from temptation, 1. Pet. 5. 8.  
Mat. 6. 13.

no

*The fourth booke*

i Iob. 14. 4. no man is pure from sinne<sup>i</sup>: but all  
Psa. 51. 5. 7. the sort of vs are fraile<sup>k</sup>.

k Iam. 3. 2.

i Iob. 13. 3.

m Eccl. 23.

19.

Est. 13. 12.

But, Lord, thou which art almighty<sup>l</sup>, and knowest all things<sup>m</sup>, raise vp the broken in heart: and cleanse the vnclane from all filthinesse, renew a new spirit within his bowels, that all faintnesse and lasinesse may leaue him, that spirituall zeale may returne, and that thy loue may continue vnmooueable within him vnto the end.

n Wis. 9. 15

For hee onely wanteth thine assistance, who is peised downe with his owne weight<sup>n</sup>: neither is he able to cast off the load of sinne, vntil thou send strength from heauen of power to loose the hard-fetters of carnall affections.

And this, my request is to obtaine: for without thy speciall grace, wee shall neither leade a godly life in this world, nor liue eternally in the life to come<sup>o</sup>.

o Rom. 6. 22

p Phi. 1. 23

And whereas I now liue in the body, it is no ioy to me: for better it were for me to dye, than to liue<sup>p</sup>, because through this life I am debarred the farther from eternall life, which cannot come, vnlesse that death doe destroy the life present.

yea



*of the Imitation of Christ.*

yea and death also it selfe be destroyed.

Hence it is, that my desire is to heavenward, and mine heart seeking eternall rest fetcheth deep sighes, and cryeth :

It is now enough, Lord, take away my soule, which thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood.

g 1 Pet. 1.

18. 19.

1 Heb. 11.

13.

Open to me the gate of thy kingdom, and let in a poore pilgrime, returning vnto thee from exile.

Listen to me, Lord, and loose me from the band of the body.

[Phil. 1. 23.]

What should I longer doe here ? I am good neither to my selfe, nor to others.

Why then doe I liue ? To my self I am burdensome, to others troublesome.

What shall become of me ? I wot not, Lord, whether thou hast foreseene any better thing of me, wherefore my longing should be lingred.

I doe allow thine ordinance, because it is good : but in me onely I finde the euill, why it griueth and troubleth me to liue in the world.

For daily I doe sinne ; I heape sinne vpon sinne, and yet as I ought,

I

*The fourth booke*

I repent not.

If therefore I were looſed from  
 Rom. 6. 6. this bodie of<sup>r</sup> ſinne, and coupled to  
 thee in heauen, neither ſhould I of-  
 fend any more, nor thou bee offen-  
 ded, but be praised continually.

Notwithſtanding as yet thou bea-  
 2. Pet. 8. 9. reſt with<sup>u</sup> mee, and ſheweſt all pati-  
 ence.

I know my fault; becauſe through  
 my ſinnes I may not enter into thy  
 kingdome. For none vncleane thing  
 Eph. 5. 5. ſhall enter<sup>x</sup> thereinto.

But when ſhall I be without ſinne?  
 Reu. 22. 15. When ſhall I thoroughly be cleaned,  
 that I may not feare to bee prohibi-  
 ted, but reioyce rather to be let in?

If I goe not forward more zea-  
 louſlie; nor be more carefull than hi-  
 therto I haue bin, I am affraide, mine  
 hope will be little enough.

But Lord, thou which wilt that  
 1. Tim. 2. no man ſhould<sup>y</sup> periſh, but that all  
 4. ſhould bee ſaued, graunt mee more  
 1. Pet. 3. 9. grace to the amendment of my life;  
 and to hope for celeftiall bleſſings,  
 giue mee the ſpirit of inward fati-  
 neſſe.

Let not mine heart heere reioyce  
 after the fleſh; but in fearing let it  
 expect

expect for death.

Let no care or creature hold mee  
backe: but let thy desired presence  
draw and comfort me.

Blessed is the man which trusteth  
in thee, O Lord: but more blessed  
is he that is passed out of this wicked  
world, for hee shall no more either  
feele or feare any trouble.

z Ps. 37. 34.  
and 27. 14.  
a Rev. 7. 17  
and 21. 4.



Chap.

## The fourth booke

## CHAP. 7.

## 1. A godly desire for a good death.

Psa. 71. 5.



Lord, thou art mine hope  
euen from my youth <sup>a</sup>.

In this hope I fly vnto thee, vntill the last  
houre and time of my  
resolution shall come.

Oh that I were so well prepared  
that I might euen now dye vnder the  
hope of grace!

Oh that I had ended this life with  
an happy departure; and laide off  
the load of this body <sup>b</sup>; how many  
dangers and feares had I then e-  
scaped?

Happy is the man whom thou hast  
chosen and taken vp, who is now  
gone out of the world vnto the fa-  
ther <sup>c</sup>; from banishment, vnto a king-  
dom <sup>d</sup>; from the prison vnto the pa-  
lace <sup>e</sup>; from darknesse vnto light <sup>f</sup>;  
from death vnto life <sup>g</sup>; vnto security  
from dangers <sup>h</sup>; from labour vnto  
rest <sup>i</sup>; and from all manner miserie  
vnto euerlasting felicitie <sup>k</sup>.

Happy is the soule that now en-  
ioyeth

Mat. 5. 48.

Ma. 25. 34.

Phi. 1. 33.

1 Reu. 22. 5.

1 Reu. 21. 4.

1 Reu. 7. 16.

27.

1 Re. 14. 23.

1 Reu. 22. 5.

joyeth her reward, triumphing in  
thee her Lord!

But, alas that my Countrie is so  
long kept from me!

How graciously and mercifully 1 Ps. 120. 5  
shouldest thou deale with mee, if  
quickly I were called away, and bid-  
den to come vnto thee, that where  
thou art I might be also?

Oh that I had beene taken out of  
this world, before euer I had known  
the filthinesse of the same, and before  
I was affraide to offend euen in small  
things: how happy then had I been?  
But now the longer here I liue, the  
more I wander from thee, and do sin  
in too too many things.

Woe is mee, what haue I done?  
Alas, I haue followed the desires of  
the flesh, and haue drawn vanitie to  
my selfe with roapes, but godlinesse  
I haue abandoned, abhorred inno-  
cencie, and added sinne vnto sinne:  
so that now to my grieve I finde that  
true which I haue sometime read <sup>m</sup>, mEsa. 3. 11.  
*Woe be to the wicked, it shall bee euill  
with him.*

Too too late almost I haue retur-  
ned vnto my G O D, yea very late  
it was ere I began to amend, & then  
too

*The fourth booke*

too but slowly went I on; I was not zealous enough in my proceeding, I did not increase in zeale, but which is worser, I waxed cooler and cooler.

Hence it was that many times I was very loath to die, because my guiltie conscience still told me I had not liued as I should haue done.

Notwithstanding, in consideration of the dangerous temptations (whereunto I am subiect) and that my sinnes might not increase, many a time haue I wished for death: and into these words haue I burst, saying:

Oh that now God in mercy would take mee out of this world, that I might sin no more vpon earth! Or that God speedily would vouchsafe to take mee away, and make an end of my labours, in what an happy state should I then be!

But, Lord, all things must bee done as thou wilt. If thou mindest to do that which I require, it shall forthwith bee accomplished; but if otherwise, thy will be done.

I may vtter out my desire, and the misery which I indure, not

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

I will him which is ignorant thereof,  
 that thereby I may finde some  
 comfort to my soule.

I know I am not yet ready as I  
 ought to bee, for my conscience is  
 hardly out of quiet.

And what marvell though I, a sin-  
 ner, doe stand in feare, seeing many  
 of the holy fathers were afraid,  
 because thou iudgest not as man  
 doth.

But how shall I prepare my selfe?  
 were good for mee to prepare my  
 selfe against that time, which may  
 come this day before to morrow for  
 any thing I know.

Therefore I will more firmly al-  
 low my purpose: I will bewaile all my  
 negligences passed: I will sacrifice  
 my self to thee, and wholly & hence-  
 forth commend my selfe vnto thy  
 mercy, O Lord.

O Lord, my God, all my works do  
 stand at thy mercie: and without  
 thy mercie I haue no merits. And  
 this is mine hope, this is all my trust.  
 But how fareth it with a good and  
 cleane conscience? What saith the  
 just, and deuout soule? Come,  
 O Lord, I beseech thee, Lord Iesus, O come, and  
 tarie

n 1. Sam. 16.

17.

Iohn 8. 15.

16.

Eph. 1. 6.

7.

p Ren. 22.

20.

*The fourth booke*

9 Psal. 40.  
21.

carry not, vntie my sinnes, loose my  
fettlers, bring me out of prison, out of  
the lake of miserie, and mirie clay.

I haue waited patiently for thee  
O Lord, incline to me and heare my  
cry. Leau me not any longer in this  
wicked world.

2 Cor. 13.  
12.

Reu. 22. 4.

Let it content thee that hitherto  
I haue striven, that so long I haue bin  
in exile; that I haue not deserved to  
enioy thee, nor to see thee face  
face.

Grant mee to enioy the long de-  
sired ioy, which no time shall end, no  
troubles ouershadov.

Mat. 18. 10

Shew me thy countenance, while  
the Angels continually behold.

Let thy voyce bee heard in mi-  
series, which they without ceasing  
heare.

1 Heb. 11.  
12, 13.

Come Lord Iesu, and take me out  
of this forrain countrie: call me  
wretch home vnto my country, and  
restore mee a sinner vnto my former  
purity.

2 Mat. 1. 21.

Come gracious Redeemer, make  
mee partaker of thine eternall glo-  
rie.

It is hie time that I returne vnto  
thee, it is now time that I commend  
my body to the earth, whereof



*the Imitation of Christ.*

was taken x.

x Gen. 2. 7.

The matter is not great where the body be laid, or how it be handled, if so be the soule bee safe, and come vnto thee.

Let my spirit doe well, which I commend into thine hands, and let my flesh rest in hope to be raised vp y I Cor. 15. againe in the last y day. For where- 31. 32. 53. soeuer it be buried, it can neuer bee far, or hid from thee.

Remoue from mee the companie of men, and ioyn me to the societie of thy Saints. For this temporall life is irkesome to me: but to thinke of the day of eternall glorie, reioy- ceth mine heart.

Oh, let not the old x serpent x Reu. 12. 9 withstand mee at my departure out of Egypt: let not the enimie barke against me in the gate: let neither Satan with his ougly sight terrifie, nor the horror of death trouble me, but let thine holy Angels faithfully assist, stoutly aide, valiantly protect, louingly receiue, and ioyfully bring me vnto the euermore felicity of thy celestiall Paradise.

And mercifull, louely, and blessed Iesu, doe thou graciously, I beseech thee, behold mee: and cast

D

me

*The fourth booke*

a Eph. 1. 3. 7

i Pet. 1. 18.

12

mee not out of the number of thy  
seruants : but remember, O Sonne  
of God, how thou hast redeemed  
me with thy precious<sup>a</sup> blood.

Receiue mee into glorie, and that  
in thy mercy and goodnesse, because  
greatly haue I wished to solemnize a  
passcouer with thee.

Oh happy day of my desired re-  
ward. Come blessed houre of blef-  
sed passage, which long I haue desi-  
red, and kept before mine eyes.

b Ro. 8. 18. What now haue the troubles and  
afflictions in the world hurt<sup>b</sup> mee  
What am I the worse for the con-  
tempt, labour, & humiliation for thy  
name sake?

c Phi. 1. 24. Thou hast been my life, and now  
death will be to mee an<sup>c</sup> aduantage  
and to be with thee in thy kingdom  
will be absolute felicitie.

d Joh. 11. 25 Now praise and glory bee to thee  
who art the life of such as<sup>d</sup> liue, the  
e Aa. 2. 26 hope of those which<sup>e</sup> dye, the  
saluation and rest of all  
which trust in  
f thee.

f Psa. 117. 7.

Psa. 34. 8.

Pro. 16. 20.

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

## CHAP. 8.

A meditation of one dead vnto  
the world, yet alive in  
Christ.



*Vrne away mine eye  
from regarding a va-  
nitie.*

Psal. 119

37.

Oh Iesu which art  
the true <sup>b</sup> life, which

b. Ioh. 11. 5

neuer shall haue end; giue me grace  
that through loue of thee I may bee  
consumed, through loue wounded,  
through loue killed, that the flesh  
reuaile not ouer me.

I am not as yet throughly dead to  
the world, but the old man yet li-  
ueth in me, raising vp within mee  
much contention, and desires of ma-  
nyfold euils, and making the nights  
darker, and the daies tedious vnto  
mee.

c Ro. 7. 23

Oh when will it fall out, that bold-  
I may say, I thought my selfe as a  
dead man? For he which dead is, doth  
neigh neither the prayes of men,  
nor the reproches of the malignant,  
because he is dead.

Hee which touching the flesh is  
dead,

*The fourth booke*

dead, neither speaketh, nor smelleth, nor tasteth, nor exerciseth any work, yea, he neither heareth also the vanitie of this world: againe, he regardeth not curious & beautifull things enticing vnto the loue of some vile thing vpon earth.

And he which is dead to the world, is not in the world, but in God, to whom hee liueth; euen as Paul to the beloued Disciples doth say <sup>d</sup>, Ye are dead, and your life is hid with God in Christ.

d. Col. 3. 3.

This man doth so speak, so think, so behold things without, as though they were not. For the things which are seene, are temporall, and vaine; but the things which are not seene are eternall.

e. 1 Ioh. 2.

17.

f. 2 Cor. 4.

18.

Hither doth hee cast his eye: hither doth hee hasten: hither is his desire: for these things doth hee labour: to attaine these things is his studie.

g. Col. 3. 1. 2.

These things hee wisheth, these things hee loueth, these things hee seeketh, these things hee saoureth euen which are within, and secret to wit, great good things, soueraigne and eternall things, of which he cannot thinke too often, because

*the Imitation of Christ.*

they are exceeding precious, and sweet, and delectable, and more than hytterable.

h 1 Cor. 2 9

This man is farre estranged from present things, and breatheth altogether after things eternall, having the dominion over the sensuall appetite.

i Gal. 5. 14

k Col. 3. 2

For the flesh seeketh outward, desireth pleasant, loveth present, loatheth absent, flieth all sharp and bitter things, which notwithstanding are good for the soule. Whence it cometh, that it will not suffer the spirit to be at rest, but layeth before it sundry fantasies, which are scarce to be spoken, and in truth not to be accounted of.

l Rem. 8.

4. 5. &amp;c.

But hee which is endued with the grace of spiritual fortitude, may with more ease subdue the insolent motions of the flesh, singing in the word of the divine power, *The Lord is with me, therefore I will not feare what flesh can doe unto me.*

m Ps. 118. 6

Therefore albeit this sensualitie doth moue battell, and the voyce of the flesh doth secretly murmur; yet doth not the spirituall man easily consent; for greater is the force of the diuine loue which inwardly

n Ro. 8. 23.

*The fourth booke*

doth comfort.

This man now and then so sweetly, so strongly, and so earnestly is drawne, rauished, and in loue with God, that scarcely he doth see, and perceiue the things about him, and be heard in the world: because he is  
**o Mat. 6. 21** not there, but *o* elsewhere: not below, but aloft euen with God, and in God, which moueth the spirit within him, and erecteth, and as it were carrieth it away in a fiery chariot, that at the length it may enioy him in an happy, and holy, and long wished desire of his heart.

This man is seldome found (idle) abroad, because his friend hath borne him away. There quietly and alone he heareth his speech, euen the speech of his beloued, and greatly doth reioice to heare the voice of his vn suspected spouse.

Neither straight-way doth he cast his phiall vpon the ground to draw vp vanitie: but hideth the found treasure, and shutteth it vnder locke and key, that the foot of pride come not in, and so all vertue do perish. For  
**p Cant. 8. 6** thus hee saith to *h*im, *Set mee as a seale on thine heart, and so forth as it followeth in that place.*

*of the Imitation of Christ*

It is good to seale the heart, and to keep it, lest the beloued goe backe, and flye away: because he seeketh & visiterh aboue all, a pure & an humble heart.

9 Mat. 5.8.  
Mat. 11.29.

These things hee thinketh with himselfe, and is astonished at that good thing which passeth all sense, and gifts. Yea still hee wandreth, and enquireth diligently, what thing is this? and exceedingly reioyceth, for that Manna is come down from heaven.

And he which ministreth true bread from <sup>1</sup>heaven, doth giue also a good <sup>2</sup> vnderstanding to the taster, that hee may know, how euery good giuing, and euery gift is from aboue, and commeth downe from the Father of lights.

1 Iam. 1.17.

This word now, saith he, is from God. Without him there is nothing. I haue all things from him.

2 Ioh. 1.3.

Furthermore, this spirituall man, he wondereth, and lamenteth that he so lightly esteemeth so excellent a good thing, by the which he is not a little blessed; and why also he doth not often bend his heart to heare and to see that, than the which nothing is more sweet, and

*The fourth booke*

blesſed to be deſired

And would to God henceforth I might thus doe. For this exceedingly doth delight mee, and more will delight mee, the more I giue my ſelfe vnto theſe meditations.

Oh that my beloued would come into mine heart, that I might taſte the ſweetneſſe of his apples.

Oh that hee would decline vnto me, and ſhew himſelfe to me, and me to himſelfe. Hee is my felicitie and mine only delight.

Now begin I to couet, and deſire, and greatly to loue this good thing, in whom all good things are: this ioy, in whom is all ioy: this one thing, in whom are all things, ſmall and great, baſe and hie: yet nothing created, but without all conceipt of man, the beginning and the end of all the good things which hee hath formed.

u Act. 17.  
28.

x Rom. 1.8.  
17

Hence it is that now and then I wou'd thoroughly bee replenished with this good thing, and filled with that ſo heavenly ioy: and I couet after a ſort euen to bee ſwallowed vp and conſumed vterly of him, that mine inſatiable deſire might once be ſatiſfied in ſuch ſort, that nothing in



*of the Imitation of Christ.*

mee might bee mine, but his onely  
whose the fire and heat of loue is,  
whose this wonderfull worke is also,  
that so I might the more greedily  
be carried to him-ward, and be made  
one spirit together with him.

Notwithstanding, all this doth not  
puffe vp the godly man, or make  
him to thinke himselfe some-what,  
or to despise others, or to iudge infe-  
riours: for he knoweth that whatso-  
euer he hath cometh not of him-  
selfe, but it is the free gift of y God, y 1 Cor. 4. 3  
that therby he is not to waxe proud,  
when he perceiuerh himselfe to be so  
comforted of the Lord.

For hee seeketh not the prayse of  
man, he careth not for forrain fauor,  
but hee seeketh the beloued, his  
prayse and his fauour hee onely desi-  
reth, in whom hee hath all things,  
and shall finde more than all these  
things: because hee preferreth his  
loue, his sweetnesse, and the ioyfull  
enioying of him before all transito-  
ry things: and his honour hee see-  
keth and sigheth for aboue all things  
ved vp selfe. And therefore he cannot bee  
proud, nor boast of any thing.

(God) he is his glory, his prayse,  
and his comfort. (God euen) hee 2 2 Cor. 1. 3

*The fourth booke*

is his true and perfect ioy, his soueraigne and sole happinesse all his desire and perfection. And which more is, he would haue others also thus to reioyce with him, and to enioy such felicitie without end both in this world, and in heauen too.

For this is his desire and prayer, that God would reueale himselfe to all men, and that he would vouchsafe to conuert & draw all vnto him, that he alone might be praised & glorified: for he is both loue it a selfe, and such a fountain of loue, as neuer can be drawn dry. For he doth more loue all men than all men (set together) can loue him.

Notwithstanding, it liketh him well, if any man hath a desire to loue him from the bottome, although he cannot sound vnto the depth. For he in louing deuoureth, vanquisheth, & surpasseth all.

## of the Imitation of Christ.

## Chap. 9.

A desire of the soule, that no  
earthly creature may carry  
her away vnto va-  
nitie.



Behold, I would take my  
flight far off, and lodge  
in the <sup>a</sup> mountaines.

<sup>a</sup> Psal. 55. 7.

Oh how profitable,  
how sweet, and how  
joyfull a thing it is to sit solitarie in  
silence, to talke with God, and to en-  
joy the onely good thing, in which  
are all good <sup>b</sup> things.

<sup>b</sup> Iam. 1. 17.

Would to God I were so conioy-  
ned to that simple and onely good  
thing, that I might be moued with  
none affections and distractions of  
transitory things, nor curiously fa-  
sten mine eyes vpon any creature, &  
visible thing.

O wretched man that I am, who  
shall deliuer me from the body of  
this death?

<sup>c</sup> Ro. 7. 24.

Alas how often dyeth my soule for  
the creatures which shee loueth! oh  
many times she forgetteth her Crea-  
tor, and is carried away for their  
sakes.

Mine

*The fourth Booke*

Mine vnstable minde now willett  
this thing, now that thing, now it is  
here, now there, seeking but not fin-  
ding rest in creatures: because there  
is no creature which can yeeld full  
d Ecclus 1.8 satietie to be <sup>d</sup> enioyed, though it  
hath some delectation for vse.

The heart of man is vnsearchable,  
e. Ier. 17.9. and who can know <sup>e</sup> it? O Lord,  
f Ps. 4.11. thou knowest the thoughts of men,  
g 1 Tim 1. that they are <sup>f</sup> vaine.

<sup>17.</sup>  
h Psal. 139. O eternall & God, most hie and  
7.8.&c. infinite, the <sup>i</sup> Creator, and Gouver-  
i Act. 17. nour of all <sup>k</sup> things, I am thy <sup>i</sup> crea-  
<sup>24.</sup>  
k Ps. 97.1. ture, which thou hast made by thy  
l Ps. 100.3. power.

& 119.73. Thou hast made me that I should  
loue thee, and gladly would I loue  
thee, but I cannot as I would.

For I am fettered with vaine loue  
and with clammy affection of tran-  
sitory things: from which, while  
would rid my selfe, hardly or not  
all can I so do without great paine.

Oh how soone would they fly and  
perish, if thou Christ wert sweet and  
didst saueur in my nostrils.

Notwithstanding, sometime through  
the sight of the minde I doe beholde  
m Re. 1.20 shine inuisible things, by the crea-  
tion of the <sup>m</sup> world, & thee also

soule

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

soueraigne felicitie, the true and eternall God.

And gladly would I continue in these meditations: but forthwith, I know not with what winde I am blowne away from them, and held <sup>a</sup> downe like a miser by the loue and weight of visible things. <sup>a</sup> Wis. 9. 15

Behold, I firmly doe purpose in mine heart, as it were making a covenant betweene me and thee, that for thy noble and precious loue, I will neither loue nor looke vpon any creature, but will contemne all things, yea my selfe and all <sup>o</sup> mine: <sup>o</sup> Ro. 8. 35. but straight-way worldly, fleshly, and familiar cogitations doe ascend into mine heart, as though in them were a certaine felicitie, and as though, if I contemned them, I were to forgo some great good thing: and these beare a good countenance, but they hide the wofull end, shewing what is present, but hiding the inconuenience that will ensue, as though euery where; and in all creatures thou art to be sought, and that nothing were to be neglected or despised, which hath been made of my God: and thus they withdrew mee oftentimes from my purpose, and at the

*The fourth booke.*

the length vtterly seduce me.

Oh how vaine, and deceitfull,  
and almost nothing, are things which  
p Ioh. 2. 15.  
16. 17. now stand and flourish, proued to  
p bee, which flying away after their  
sudden ioyes, doe leaue me among  
the thornes and briars of a guiltie  
conscience.

But woe is me, Lord, yea woe  
again to me, because so soon I haue  
beleued and assented to vanity, and  
so quickly forsaken thee, which art  
q Ioh. 14. 6 the true truth.

Oh, how greatly haue I sinned  
euen in this, that I haue not sticken  
to thee alone, neglecting all things  
r Luk. 13.  
29. 30. else.

For I was made to loue and to en-  
ioy thee: but by following after crea-  
tures inordinately, I haue lost thee,  
r Eccles. 1. 8 and found no rest for mine heart in  
them & neither.

But turne me vnto thee, O Lord,  
and leaue me not in earthly things,  
thou which hast vouchsafed to pro-  
mise celestially things to such as fol-  
r Mat. 19. 8  
Luke 9. 23. low & thee,

## of the Imitation of Christ

## CHAP. 10.

1. A comparison betweene earthly,  
and heauenly ioyes: 2. with a prayer  
for grace to contemne this  
transitorie world.



Y soule hath refused  
a comfort.

a Psal. 77.

Wander thou not  
after deceitful vani-  
ties and madnes, O  
my soule, but turn to  
the Lord thy God,  
for he is the fountaine of all b comfort.

b 2 Cor. 1. 3.

Whatsoeuer thou seekest eyther  
among men, or among creatures,  
thou shalt leese it, and shalt well  
perceiue it to perish. For though I  
grant, they may yeeld some shew of  
comfort, yet sure I am nothing doth  
c continue.

c 1 oh.

15. 16. 17.

1 Cor. 7. 31.

Why so vainely wilt thou bee de-  
ceiued? It is egregious folly to beg-  
of a beggar, when he that is rich will  
giue abundantly. Euery creature is  
but poore, to minister comfort vnto  
vs; but God which is rich in d mercy,  
giueth to all men e liberally, and  
reprocheth no man, if thou for thy  
part diligently doe f seeke, and pa-  
tiently

d Ephe. 2. 4.

e Iam. 1. 5.

f Mat. 7. 7.

*The fourth Booke*

tiently expect his leisure.

g Gen. 8.9. Returne, O my soule, returne down vnto Noah in the <sup>8</sup>Arke, euen vnto Christ in thine heart, because it is not good to abide long abroad.

h 1 Ioh. 2. 15. See thou refuse outward comfort, if inwardly thou wilt be <sup>b</sup> refreshed.

i Gen. 8.7. Doe not thou with the Crow abide without the <sup>i</sup> arke, but with speede auoyd the carkas. Returne thou an hungred, and Christ so will feed thee with the bread of <sup>k</sup> life.

k Ioh. 6. 31. 32. 35.

If vrgent necessitie, or weaknesse hold thee abroad, take heede thou make no stay, but with speede get thee home, least thou bee either ouerwhelmd with the flood of words, or comprehended in the snares of diuelish temptation.

Many traps are laid for the wandering soule; and great safety hath the quicke returning Doue: which not finding where to set her foote, made hast to come backe vnto Noah in the ship.

Gen. 8.9.

Goe thou therefore vnto thy secret place and abide there, yea let it bee a griefe for thee to be elsewhere.

m Mat. 5. 8. Oh blessed is the soule, which hath a cleere conscience before God, and is not delighted with any

vaine



*of the Imitation of Christ.*

aine n thing, which is neither pollu-  
ed with louing any o thing, nor wea-  
ried with extreame hating any  
man.

n Luk. 28.  
29. 30.  
o 1 Ioh. 2.  
13. 16.

Blessed is the soule that seeketh no  
comfort of creatures, but fixeth all  
her hope in the Lord.

p Mat. 5.  
22 23. &c.  
q Psa. 40. 4

Blessed is the soule which refuseth  
all outward and temporal quietness,  
and whatsoeuer belongeth vnto the  
wellfare of the bodie: and which for  
the loue of CHRIST doth willing-  
ly embrace both paine and pouer-  
ty.

r Mat. 19.  
29.

Blessed is the soule which commen-  
deth her selfe to God, that hee may  
doe with her euen as hee thinketh  
good.

Blessed is the soule which at no  
time seeketh her owne glory, which  
desireth at no time to haue her own  
will done: but continually mindeth,  
looueth, and preferreth the glory and  
will of God about all things.

f Ier. 9. 24.  
1 Cor. 1. 31.

Blessed is the soule which doth  
strange her selfe from whatsoeuer  
temporall, and keepeth her selfe  
pure and vndefiled before God in all  
her dealings.

t 1 Ioh. 2.  
15. 16.  
u Pf. 15. 1. 2

O reioyce and be thou much glad,  
thou which art such a soule: for thou  
mayest

*The fourth booke*

maist abide in secret and celestial cogitations, & so magnifie the Lord day and night.

Blessed and blessed againe is the  
 x Colof. 3. soule whose desires are to <sup>x</sup> heaven  
 1.2. ward, whose hands and armes are  
 y Eze. 1 1. out-stretched euen as the two wings  
 22. of the 7 Cherubins; whose eyes are  
 z Mat. 5.8. pure to behold <sup>z</sup> God, whose inward  
 power and strength doth go altogether,  
 and ascend, and returneth not  
 vntil it haue him whom only she loveth  
 before all things. And when she hath  
 found him, shee followeth him whither  
 soeuer he will haue her.

And when he speaketh, he reioyceth  
 to heare her make answer, saying;  
 I am thine only beloued, of the elect-  
 ed. I am thine exceeding great  
 a Gen. 15.2 a reward. Be thou neither proud  
 in prosperitie, nor impatient in aduersitie.  
 Consider how they which loue me are  
 comforted of me. How sweetly, thinkest  
 thou, I will intreat them, when they  
 shall be receiued vnto eternall rest,  
 after that the troubles of the body and  
 soule are laid aside.

Oh that I enioyed such pleasure as  
 doeth the holy soule, when the inward  
 sense

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

ences being a sleep, she is carried a-  
 ost, and eleuated aboue her selfe, be-  
 oued, and coupled to God by the  
 bond of most hearty friendship! Oh  
 my God, which art the treasure of  
 mine heart, thou knowest right wel <sup>b</sup> Mat. 6. 21  
 how this would bee the onely com-  
 fort of mine inward grieve. But thou  
 art the giuer, & the pouser in of this  
 comfort.

Thou <sup>c</sup> teachest, thou exhortest, <sup>c</sup> 2 Tim. 3.  
 thou cherishest, thou comfortest, 16.  
 thou carriest, thou vpholdest, thou  
 guidest out and bringest backe, thou  
 dost with the soule whom thou  
 hast chosen, euen as thou wilt, and  
 whatsoever thou dost and wilt, it is  
 all good.

But I who am as a sowre vessel, al-  
 together vnworthy to receiue the  
 infusion of thy good spirit, do hum-  
 bly craue that plentifully it may so  
 pouer forth vpon me, that I may both  
 taste the sweetnesse of thine inward  
 loue, and also perceiue those sacred  
 pleasures, the which, I doubt not, the  
 religious soule doth feelee by thy  
 grace.

I did smell the celestially perfumes  
 far off, when I did meditate certain  
 inward cogitations of the minde.  
 concei-

*The fourth Booke*

concerning the soule: but Lord, thou knowest how seldom, how little I do thinke of eternall things, how often words do wither, how rude the vnderstanding, how vnquiet the conscience, how my heart is troubled, darkened, and irreligious, and only through mine owne default.

Notwithstanding, sometime seeking a way vnto spiritual matters, hauing taken my cogitations with mee in secret, I begin seriously to call in to my remembrance the good things of the blessed soule: how great are the celestially ioyes, and spiritual delights which are in her heart: what peace, what tranquillitie, what hope, and reioycing in God her Sauieour, whose words be sweet, and face beautifull. And these cogitations, though short, they endure, yet when they come blessed is the houre.

And I thus thinking, and thou enlightning my darkenes, I do find my complaints vpon my selfe, & by the many holes of grace, I perceiue how such and such is the soule inwardly vnited vnto thee, and that so and so thou hast spoken to her.

She is still from all things sensible

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

and thou in the spirit speakest to her of inuisible matters.

Shee seemeth as it were to be forsaken of all creatures, and after an vnspokeable maner thou dost comfort her.

So that I said againe in my heart,  
Wo to the sinfull<sup>e</sup> soule, to the grieued<sup>d</sup> conscience, to the man which  
c. Deu. 27.  
26  
Gal. 3. 10.  
d Pro. 3. 33.  
& 24. 19.  
e Reu. 3.  
15. 16.  
is neither hot nor<sup>e</sup> cold, destitute of the light of grace, and of spirituall comfort, seeking teares, and yet finding none.

But peace bee to him which vncertainly doth loue Christ, and neuer turneth aside the eyes of his heart from his<sup>f</sup> Saviour: but continually  
f Col. 3. 8.  
seeketh the things which are pleasing in his eyes.

For he shall walke in peace and equitie, and no stranger shall participate of his pleasure. He shal well perceiue that his rest is good, and taste how sweet his Lord God is, in whom hee<sup>g</sup> trusteth. He shall set him farre  
g. Psal. 34.  
from outward cuncts, and with hearty desire expect his prosperous coming. Lo, thus worketh the Lord in his elected vessels.

Hee which commeth vnto him, shall not returne emptie away: for  
cheere-

*The fourth booke*

**h** Mat. 25.  
35.

cheerefully hee bestoweth vpon the  
thirsty drinke, and bread vpon the  
hungry.

O my God, when thou entrest in  
to the house of the soule which lo-  
ueth thee, wilt thou not feede her  
with thy milke? yea, and bring her  
sometime beside her selfe, through  
thine abundant sweetnesse, to the ta-  
king of thee without any corporall  
similitude.

O truth, truth, of what force and  
power is loue!

Then wilt thou speak thy word to  
her all secretly, and shew the things  
that shall be, and haue beene in mo-  
happy charitie, and fruition, when  
the words of man shall no more be  
heard.

From henceforth thou wilt cause  
her no whit to doubt any more of e-  
ternall rest, and of the fellowship of  
Saints: but now by deferring the to-  
ken of speciall grace, thou makest her  
the more able to hope for the things  
she seeth not, and to despise present  
things which by sense thee compre-  
hendeth.

**i** Ro. 8. 24.

O mercifull God, be mindefull of  
me a poore beggar, euen of thy great  
mercy; and send the true bread  
from

**h** 1 Cor. 1. 3

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

from <sup>h</sup>heaven thy good word so full  
of comfort and grace.

1 Ioh. 6.31.  
32. & c.

## CHAP. XI.

That all comfort, and pleasures  
are in God. 2 A prayer that all peo-  
ple may glorifie the Lord. 3. The  
blessed state of good men. 4. That  
wee are to bee ready against  
the comming of our  
Saviour Christ.

*Let my bones shall say,  
Lord, who is like unto  
thee?*

There is <sup>h</sup>one, and  
like to him there is  
none, euen my God it <sup>d</sup>is, to whom,  
whatsoeuer is compared, is <sup>e</sup>no-  
thing.

a Psal. 35. 10.  
b Deut. 6. 4.  
c 1 Ki. 8. 23.  
d Ioh. 20. 17.  
e Pro 3. 15.  
I say 46. 9.

My God is entirely to bee loued,  
and a most faithfull friend, which ne-  
uer forsaketh the soule that loueth  
him, but continually abideth with  
her for company. And if sometime  
he hide himselfe, and suffer her to be  
troubled, it is not done of him to de-  
stroy, but to try <sup>e</sup>her, to purge <sup>d</sup>her,  
and to instruct <sup>i</sup>her, so that euen  
when hee forsaketh not, but the more  
lovely instructeth, that euery one  
may

f Ioh. 13. 1

g Iam. 1. 12  
h Wis 3. 6.  
i Psal. 119. 71

*The fourth Booke*

may see what hee is of himselfe, and how farre he is come forward (in religion.)

O my beloued, thou art all fair-  
lously, but not to the flesh, but to the  
minde: nor to the eye or sense, but  
the faithful soule; to him which ha-  
k Mat. 5. 8. a pure heart<sup>k</sup>, to him which is al-  
gether addicted vnto things inuisible  
and spirituall<sup>l</sup>.

1 2 Cor. 4.  
18

So that whoso desireth to be v-  
ted to thee by a religious affectio-  
he must of necessity mortifie in his  
selfe all fleshly motions, and abe-  
all retain a pure conscience. For thou  
art much displeased then, when a man  
doth go vnto fraile creatures to see  
consolation.

And therefore thou callest me  
wardly to loue thee<sup>m</sup>, and thou  
m Luke 14. 27. commandest that I waite for thee  
for then I shall finde thee, when I  
humble my selfe, and wish that which  
thou wilt.

And this shall be all my felicity  
euen freely to serue thee, neyther  
dreading any losse, nor seeking any  
gain: because thou allowest the  
a Mat. 10. 7. soule which purely doth loue<sup>n</sup>

Oh blessed is hee, which both  
life and death sticketh only to thee



*the Imitation of Christ.*

But as forme I am far-away cast  
 oftentimes from thy fauour, by louing  
 and that both inordinately, and vn-  
 discreetly, transitorie things. But that  
 I may not perish with them, I wish all  
 speede will retourne, and behold in  
 thy glorie, and direct all my  
 cogitations to thee-ward.

O my Lord, & God, which of no-  
 thing hast made all things, giue  
 me grace for all things to praise thy  
 name.

For all power, wisdom, good-  
 ness, & mercy, is thine; thine also is  
 euerlasting glorie and maiestie.

Thy kingdome is an euerlasting  
 kingdome; and thy dominion indu-  
 eth throughout all ages.

Thou orderest all things, both  
 things aboue, and things in earth.

Thou knowest all things; and  
 thou possessest all things; nothing doth

disturb thee, or trouble thee: but quietly  
 thou rulest the world, and makest the

bellious to steepe, and to serue.  
 Thou art priue to all things which

are done in the world; and before  
 they were done thou knewest their

end.  
 Thou art the God both of heauen  
 and earth, the creatour of things

visible

invisible

*The fourth booke*

f Psal. 82. 11. visible and inuisible f, the gouernor  
Psal. 115. 15. of the whole world s, and the dispo-  
s Psal. 47. 1. ser of the seasons h.

2. 6. & c.

h Eccle. 43

3. 6. & c.

O blesse thy seruants, I beseech thee, dispersed far and wide ouer the world, yet seruing thee most religiously. Make them (constantly) to sound forth thy praise, and in all places with one voice to glorifie thy name.

Stir vp their hearts firmly to loue thee; and graunt that all their enterprises may take a good ende.

Oh, how gracious, and how good art thou to such as loue thee! how sweets art thou to them which taste thee!

1. Cor. 2.

2. Psal. 34. 8.

They which haue smelt thy sweetness, know thereby the better how both to thinke and speake. For thy sweetnesse surpasseth all sweetnesse and thy pleasures doe sweeten all bitterness.

O Lord my God, holie men haue spoken, and Prophets haue talked of thee.

All the godlie from the world beginning haue beleued in thee, haue serued thee, haue glorified thee both with sacrifices and oblations, they haue praised and blessed thee.

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*of the Imitation of Christ.*

thine holy name: because they haue  
both acknowledged thee to bee the  
Creator and maker of the vniuersall  
world; and also trusted in thee aboue  
all things <sup>1</sup>.

1 Heb. 11. 3

3. &amp;c.

They haue knowne thee in their  
visions, for thou hast reuealed thy  
name to them; and beside thee they  
knewe no God. They obserued the  
lawe of thy commandements, which  
thou gauest them.

They followed not the foolish ima-  
ginations of false gods: but they  
worshipped thee which liuest for e-  
uer <sup>2</sup>; the Creator of all things <sup>3</sup>.

m 1. Tim. 1

They lifted vp their voice to thee  
with thanksgiuing: because from on

17.

n A. 8. 172

24.

high thou soundest in their eares, say-  
ing <sup>4</sup>; I am that I am. Before me there  
was no God formed <sup>5</sup>; neither shall there

Heb. .1. 3.

o Ex. 3. 14.

p Isa. 43. 10.

be after mee. I haue ordained the  
things which shall bee, and I forget  
not what soeuer is past.

This when they heard and under-  
stood, they cast the eies of their faith  
farre off, beleeuing that God will  
ouercome, and that he which shall come,  
will come, and will not tarry <sup>6</sup>.

q Heb. 10. 37

Knowing these things afore hand  
they were not a little comforted, and

*The fourth booke*

marvellously astonished, at the presence of the glorie to come, they fainted. But afterward comming by little and little to themselves, & with ioy beholding the power of God approaching, they saide, He is, even he is the Lord our God, and we haue none other. Hee hath taken vs, and hee will saue vs. Hee cannot denie himselfe, because hee is faithfull.

2. Tim. 2.

13.

1. Iohn. 7.

1.3.

1. Ioh. 3. 11.

As we haue heard, so we haue seene, as we haue beleeued, so wee haue spoken, and borne witness to the truth.

u Psa. 33. 9.

x I say. 46.

10.

y Psa. 33. 10.

Once the Lord did speake, and it was done. Hee said, My counsaile shall stand; but yours shall come to naught, O ye sonnes of men.

z Mich. 2. 1.

Woe vnto them which imagine euill, and afterward make a scoff at the word of God.

Woe vnto you which doe faine religion out of your owne brains, and are exalted in your owne power.

Heare the Word of the Lord, which serue the Lord: know ye, that he hath a controuerisie with the inhabitants of the earth.

a. Hof. 4. 1.

To turne away your selues, is not good; stand yee therefore

consider

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

consider his waies.

Returne you and come vnto him,  
so will hee ioyfully receiue you into  
fauour; for the Lord is gracious and  
mercifull.

b Ex. 32.6.

Hee keepeth not his anger as man  
doth; but pardoneth all iniquities, yea  
and moreover he restoreth the for-  
mer grace with the later.

c Iona. 4.2.

Hos. 11.9.

Onely returne you with all your  
hart: and dedicate your selues whol-  
lie and vnfainedly to his seruice.  
Thus doe the Saints speake in mine  
eares.

That which manick is at a banker,  
and sweete smelling frankincense in  
a censer: euen that is the word of  
God in a pure heart.

And thy Saints, Lord, filled with  
thy Spirit, haue thus founded forth  
the memorie of thine abundant  
sweetnes; and haue left their words  
vnto vs to be sounded abroad.

But my speech oftentimes is stop-  
ped, so that it hath no passage to as-  
cend. But if that fire come from a-  
bout, then shall my tongue be hot: &  
if it once bee inflamed, I shall forth-  
with be consumed.

I shall not be able to stand in the  
patience thereof; for as the winde

*The fourth booke*

drieth away chaffe, so shall sorrow be expelled from the heart. And as the rust by the fire : so shall my sinnes be consumed.

The fire of God which consumeth all things, shall sweepe the floore of mans heart. Descend, and get vpon mee a little, and I shall see.

Things passed shall be as though they had neuer beene, and that to come shall not be accompted of ; for all sinnes shall vterly be forgotten.

Old things shall passe away, newe shall come abundantly ; holic desires shall increase, and rise vp on all sides, wheresoeuer the good spirit shall blowe.

Fear shall depart, loue shall possesse the hearts of all ; all affliction shall cease : for this alteration is by the hand of God.

Therefore that which I say, is not to mine owne but to his praise.

The penurie hath comfort ; the hungry, bread ; the thirstie, drinke ;

The sick are healed ; the wauering assisted ; the weak strengthened ; the wearie quieted ; the hopelesse comforted ; the complainer pitied ;

To the blinde sight ; to the wandering a ready way ; to the knocker

the gate is opened.

He which doubted, is now resolved; hee which staggered, is now strengthened; he that diligently enquired, is now entertained ioyfully by mother charitie. The friend cometh more ioyfully to meete, than is the soule desirous to speake with him.

Lo now am I present, saith hee, say L.  
on, what newe thing hath fallen out?  
What, haue you forgotten what you  
are to suffer and to doe for my sake?

Yet this staied me not, being desirous to goe forward with him. B.  
So straight-way I mounted a lost, and  
forgot all mine affliction.

He would not by and by discomfort the partie so longing to abide with him: but with gentle words he said, that in due time it should be performed.

Thy desire is good, and request vnto mee doth like me well: notwithstanding, it may not presently be graunted. L.

Go thy way, and get home to thine owne house, and declare to thine acquaintance what the Lord hath done for thee.

Saie vnto them, Prepare your hearts

*The fourth booke*

hearts euerie one of you; and laie  
downe the heauie burden of sinne;  
and be ye warie, and strong to resist

d Iam. 4. 7. the snares of Satan.

c Mat. 26. Watch and pray, lest yee fall into  
41. temptatione.

Mark. 14. I will come shortly, looke that I  
38. finde you readie.

Lo, I haue warned you aforehand.

Chap. 12.

1. The desire of the soule after God.

2. The properties of God by the sundry  
titles alcribed vnto him. 3. None  
can commeth vnto God, vntlesse  
God draweth him.

a. Psa. 33. 3.



Say vnto my soule, I am  
thy saluation. Oh, of what excellen-  
cie art thou, my soule,  
what wonderfull vertue  
is hidden in thee, that thou canst re-  
st be at rest, vntill thou haue at-  
tained perfect happines, and found the  
last end which thou so desirest: which  
once being knowne and found out,  
the care is gone.

Oh happinesse aboue all happi-  
nes; O end without end, when shall I  
both



## of the Imitation of Christ.

both without measure, & eueralasting-  
ly inioy thee?

I finde many good things in this  
world. But they continue not<sup>b</sup>, nei-  
ther doe they satisfie my desire<sup>a</sup>.

But one thing is necessarie<sup>d</sup>. This  
one thing is that I seeke; this one  
thing I desire.

For one thing are all things<sup>e</sup>; and  
of one thing are all things<sup>f</sup>. If I get  
this thing, I shall be content: but if I  
enioy it not, I shall continually be  
tossed, because many things cannot  
satisfie me.

What is this one thing? I am not  
able to say what it is; sure I am I de-  
sire that, than which, nothing either  
is or may be imagined either better  
or greater<sup>g</sup>.

For this is not one thing among  
many things; but one thing about  
all things<sup>h</sup>. And it is my GOD, to  
whom if I sticke, I shall doe well<sup>i</sup>.

To him I say, to him I cry, when I  
say, Say vnto my soule, I am thy situa-  
tion<sup>k</sup>.

O my soule, my longing soule,  
what more desirest thou? Is it not  
better for thee to cleaue vnto one  
thing, than vnto many things? Of  
one thing are many things<sup>l</sup>, but

E s

one

b 1. Cor. 7.

31.

1. Iohn. 1.

15. 16.

c Eccles 1.

8.

d Lu. 10.

42.

e. I. I. 43. 7.

f Gen. 1. 1.

2. &amp; c.

Iohn. 1. 1. 3.

g Esa. 46. 5.

6. &amp; c.

Iob 41. 1.

2. &amp; c.

h Ezra. 5. 11

i Psal. 73. 8.

k Psal. 35. 3.

*The fourth booke*

one thing is nor of many things.

Cease to seeke many things, ioyne thee to one, stick vnto one: for in one thing all things consist.

Let others enquire after manifold and diuers outward things: but doe thou seeke one inward good thing, and it is sufficient.

an. Mat. 22. 3  
Luk. 14. 18.

Lo, this man seeketh a farme, that man trauelleth about his merchandise, another heapeth vp much gold and siluer, another hunteth after pleasures and preferment, another visiteth his friends and kindred, another is merrie with his acquaintance, another rideth vnto cities and castles, another dooth long to see diuers countries of the world, another desireth wisdom, another preferment, another principallitie, another a kingdome: and thus one wisheth one thing, another man another thing, euen as well among the spiritnall sort, as among the secular. But few doe thinke one thing, and (other things) purely and simply for one thing. And therefore they neither doe finde any sure peace, nor yet fauor the inward grace of the spirit.

For so many as are the seruants

*of the Imitation of Christ*

of Christ; doe couet not temporall,  
nor earthly things<sup>n</sup>, as though they<sup>n</sup> Col. 3. i.  
were then iolly & glorious fellows,  
if they abounded therewith.

What then? Wilt thou say that the  
things which they seeke for, do touch  
thee, O deuout soule? in truth thou  
canst not.

For my parte, I detest all these things:  
for my good thing is but one thing: I  
loue but one thing, I require but one  
thing: and this one thing is better to  
me than all other things either in  
heauen or in earth.

If thou hast found such a good  
thing, my counsell is, that you hold  
and keepe it for whole sake you haue  
contemned all things. For hauing  
that, it shall not grieue you to want  
other things: nay, you will iudge it  
reason for the getting thereof, that  
you doe both giue<sup>e</sup>, and suffer all  
things p. o Phil. 3. 8.  
p Rom. 8. 35

Now therefore, O my soule, seeke<sup>38</sup>.  
thou after so singular, and superex-  
cellent a good thing.

So long as you liue in the flesh, you  
are of necessitie to seeke: because that  
cannot too carefully bee sought for,  
which can at no time sufficiently be  
comprehended<sup>1</sup>. 1. Cor. 2. 9

But

*The fourth Booke*

But then shall you cease seeking, when the house of enioying is once come. For then shall he be all in all; euen hee which alone is all-sufficient for all, and euery man.

1 Cor. 15.  
28.

And although there, too, he must be sought, where hee is continually found: yet is hee not there sought with labor, as in this world, but with surpassing pleasure, and loue.

1 Cor. 13.  
13e.

What he is in this life to the godly, it may bee declared by his manifold Titles: and such as haue experience (of his goodnes) knowe very well how it may be shewen.

Notwithstanding, consider what the names of God are, as I haue learned them in the schoole of experience: I will recite a few, but the grace (of his Spirit) may put you in minde of many moe beside.

Loe, hee is a Spouse<sup>a</sup>, to such as loue; but to such as still serue him in feare, a dreadfull Lord<sup>a</sup>.

Deu. 6. 13

Mat. 4. 10.

Mat. 6. 9.

2 Ti. 4. 8.

Heb. 12. 23.

2 Mat. 9. 12.

1 Iohn. 6.

15. 16.

1 Ioh. 7. 16.

Hee is a Father to good children<sup>a</sup>; but to the obstinately wicked, a seuerer Iudge<sup>a</sup>.

To the sick, he is a Physician<sup>a</sup>, & to the whole, wholesome food<sup>a</sup>.

To the ignorant, a teacher<sup>b</sup>, and to the obedient, an euerlasting Sa-

uourer

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

Hee is the way<sup>d</sup> for beginners, <sup>d</sup> Ioh. 14. 6  
the truth for proceeders, the<sup>e</sup> life <sup>e</sup> Ioh. 11. 25  
for the absolute performers of his ho-  
ly will. <sup>f</sup> Col. 1. 27

Hee is the hope<sup>f</sup> of repencers, and <sup>1</sup> Tim. 1. 1  
a surpassing comfort<sup>g</sup> of the righ- <sup>g</sup> Ioh. 14.  
teous. 26.

He is a crowne<sup>h</sup> for the humble, <sup>h</sup> Luk. 2. 32  
and a punishment<sup>i</sup> for the proude. <sup>i</sup> Ro. 9. 33.

In darknes hee is a light<sup>k</sup>; and in <sup>k</sup> Ioh. 1. 8. 9  
the night a lantern<sup>l</sup>. <sup>l</sup> Iohn 3. 19

Hee giueth medicine to the disea- <sup>1</sup> Ioh. 8. 12  
sed soules, and much wine of com- <sup>1</sup> Iohn. 1. 5.  
fort, to the sorrowfull.

With such as stand to the battell,  
he standeth; with such as proceede  
in their iourney, he walketh; with such  
as feruently make haste, hee run-  
neth; with such as mount in diuine  
contemplation, he flieth.

Doe you pray? he is present with  
you. Doe you reade? he is talking  
with you. Doe you meditate? hee is  
still with you.

One and the same GOD worketh  
in all these things, shewing himselfe  
to euery one, euen as hee thinketh  
good: in his words there is no fault,  
and his works are past finding out.

For great and vnsearchable are  
his

*The fourth booke*

**m** Ro. ii. 33. his iudgements <sup>m</sup>, & no man is to saie  
vnto him, Why dost thou so? or why  
dost thou chuse this man rather than

**n** Isay. 43. that man =?

9. Ro. 11.

Rom. 9. 20.

21. &c.

It is folly for a man to reason a-  
gainst the Almighty: and all the will  
of Adams children is vaine, and to  
no purpose.

How like you these things, & how  
dooth God saue you?

**S.** He seemeth sweete vnto me; nei-  
ther am I offended at his workes.

**o** Psal. 19.

137.

**p** Ioh. 8. 56

He is righteous, and who can  
rebuke him of ill dealing?

He that so dooth, dooth set him-  
self against God, and shall be reproo-  
ued of his irreprehensible light.

**M.** But what thou hast heard, what  
it in his presence? scarce vndoubted-  
ly so much as a sparke, without the  
which is hidden within.

Aske you what that is? I must say  
I knowe it not, it is altogether above  
my capacitie, euen as a certain cloud  
far off, whose beginning and end are  
vnknowne.

And therefore meditate rather, &  
thinke more often vpon the base hu-  
manitie of Iesus, and do not mount  
vp too high, lest of his glorious ma-  
iestie you be confounded,

But

Chap. 12. 87 None runneth except God draweth,  
*of the Imitation of Christ.*

But, forsomuch as burning loue  
dooth now and then forget all reue-  
rence and feare, you are (in that re-  
spect) the more to be borne withall,  
if sometime, being extreamely set on  
fire with the loue of Iesus, you doe  
consider not onely how hee cried in  
the manger <sup>q</sup> and how hee hanged <sup>r</sup>  
vpon the crosse <sup>r</sup>: but also how hee <sup>31. 32. &c.</sup>  
reigneth now in heauen all glorious. <sup>(Phi. 2. 9. 10)</sup>  
ly <sup>r</sup>, and ruleth all things vnder hea-  
uen most wonderfully <sup>r</sup>.

O most lovely Iesu, gladly doe I s.  
follow thee in earth: but more glad-  
lie would I follow thee vnto heauen.

Where my treasure is, there would  
mine heart be also <sup>r</sup>.

Oh, thou art my treasure, thou <sup>r</sup> Mat. 6. 21  
which art at the right hand of the fa-  
ther <sup>r</sup>, art deerer vnto mee than any  
treasure. For my sake, thou wert in-  
carnate, for my sake, thou wast ele-  
uare.

Thou diddest leane thy selfe an ex-  
ample vpon earth, thou keepest thy  
selfe for a reward in the heauens. <sup>y Ioh. 13. 13</sup>  
<sup>1. Pet. 2. 21.</sup>

Vpon thee therefore mine eyes are  
fixed, and after thee doe my feet  
trace. To thee, mine heart saith, My  
face seeketh thee O Lord, I will con-  
tinually seeke thy face <sup>r</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Psa. 27. 8

Q

*The fourth Booke*

O Lord, how long wilt thou hide  
the sight of thy glorie? Why hidest  
a Iob. 13. thou thy face<sup>a</sup>, and takest mee for  
24. thine enemy?

Thou knowest right well, my mind  
will be distracted hither and thither,  
and bee diuersly bent, vntill it be fast  
ioyned to thee her friend in the hea-  
uens.

For the force of loue knoweth not  
b Sal. S. 8. how to bee quiet<sup>b</sup>: but vncessantly  
6.7. maketh inquirie of her louer, send-  
deth forth messengers, and doubleth  
prayers: neither doth it so giue ouer,  
because loue will altogether possesse  
that which it desireth.

Therefore drawe mee<sup>c</sup>, that  
e Sal. S. 1.3. may begin zealouslie to runne after  
thee. I had neede to be drawne, and  
with great force to be drawne. For  
d Ioh. 6.44 vnlesse thou draw, none will come:  
none will follow: because euery one  
is naturally inclined to himselfe  
ward.

But if thou once drawe, lo then I  
doo hasten, then I run, then I waxe  
hot. But if thou doe not drawe, I doe  
neither runne, nor seeke, yea scarce  
haue I any desire at all to followe.  
If thou reach out thine hand, I doe  
run so much the more swiftly, as  
thou



## of the Invitation of Christ.

thou forceably dost draw.

This is the voice of my loue drawing<sup>e</sup>, And when I am lift up from the earth, I will draw all men unto mee.

e Iohn. 12.  
2.3.

O sweete Iesu, draw me after thee: and then not I onely, but all shall run after thee by the saour of thine ointments<sup>f</sup>.

f Sal. S. 1.  
32.

First therefore drawe me after thee, then let others follow, seeing an example of good life.

But, that we may not waxe proud, is good that we marke this withall, how that wee began to runne, not through our owne strength, but by the saour of thine ointments.

This is the heauenly drawing, without which no man can goe forward, no not so much as begin; as likewise thou diddest say: No man can come unto mee, except my father draw him.

g Ioh. 6.44

So that whom the father draweth, he followeth thee, and forsaketh himselfe.

He seemed to be well drawne that said: Master I will follow thee, whithersoever thou goest. But euery one hath not the gift to bee so affected: either is it a weake stomack that can not readily follow thee unto all things.

h Mat. 8.19  
Luk. 9.57.

What

*The fourth booke*

What lette haſt thou O my ſoule  
that thou doſt not forſake all for Ieſus  
ſake? why ſo vnwillingly doe you  
depart from vaine and tranſitory  
things? What good can theſe world  
things doe you?

Beholde, while you passe by mo  
tall things, and visible creatures, wi  
ling to delight your self in them, y  
forget better things. While you  
doe, you seuer your selfe from the  
meraine good thing, and turne yo  
minde from the true, blessed, and  
ternall life.

And therefore you shall continue  
miserable and wretched, full of grief  
Eccle. 2. 17 and vexation.

For turne your selfe on which side  
you will, and you shall finde many  
of continuall sorrow, and much trou-  
bles, vntill thou turne againe vnto  
thy creator, because he is thy peace  
and secure quietnesse.

But, if thou neither make staid  
earthly things, nor fasten thy foot  
in the mire, but rather beholde  
worship in the glasse of worldly crea-  
tures, nor the figure which passeth  
waie, but him whose image and  
perscription it is, blessed art thou, and  
shalt neuer die.

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

For when thou seekest after these  
visible things not to enioy them,  
but beholdest them to the ende to  
glorifie the name of thy Creator, by  
making to thy selfe of his best and  
best works a kind of a ladder where-  
withall thou maiest ascend, thou  
shalt be deliuered so from thy filthie  
bowels of this world, and throughly  
be coupled to thy desired ende,  
which is aboue all things  
the blessed God for  
euer and euer.

*chap.*

## The fourth Booke

## CHAP. 13.

1. How, and when the soule and God  
are united together. 2. The misery  
where God is not  
present.

a Psal. 63. 8.



*I Soule cleaue to thee*  
O my God, the true  
comforter, thou  
knowest how thou  
keest me well, and how

I take pleasure daily to be talking  
with thee secretly alone.

But where may I seeke thee, if hap  
pely I doe misse thee for an houre  
who shall bring me vnto thee?

b Ilay 46. 9.

Thou art God above all things,  
and I beneath all things, a miserable  
man. Thou art in heauen, & I in  
world. Thou art most high, but I am  
poore and a beggar.

c Mat. 6. 9.

Who euer hath measured the di-  
stance betweene heauen and earth  
Far asunder bee they, but farther  
thou from me, O God.

Who therefore shall vnite mee  
thee? either thou must doe it, or none  
can.

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

But if thou wilt, it may speedily be  
done. And thou knowest, how of my  
selfe I may easily fall: but that I doe  
and go stand, and goe forward, it is of thy  
goodnes,

So that my soule dependeth vpon  
the grace of thy spirit, and of the in-  
fusion of thy speciall fauour.

If thou command, it shall be lifted  
up from the earth: but if thou turne  
the way thy face, it shall be greatly trou-  
bled.

But of thy wonted fauer and mer-  
cy receiue mee, & let thy right hand  
guide me wonderfully vnto thee.

Heare this, all yee people, giue d Psal. 49. 1

if haue all yee that dwell in the world;  
for it is an easie thing with God to  
bring it to passe, as it is written, that  
the rich and poore may be all one.

I am poore, and lack many things;  
but this my God is rich, and wanteth  
nothing.

And although no great experi- Psal. 50. 11. 12.

ence, yet I haue an vndoubted te-  
stimonie to prooue that the soules  
through grace may bee vnited to  
God.

My beloved is mine, saith he, and f. Sal. S. 2. 16.  
I am his, he feedeth among the lilies.

This

*The fourth booke*

This is the testimony of the friend  
& his darling; of the bridegroom  
and the spouse. : and it is a verie  
and a strong testimonie of the he  
law.

**gloh.17.21** The next is like to this & *I will that*  
*they all may be one, as thou, O father*  
*art in mee, and I in thee.*

Behold the notable testimonies  
two books, whereby it plainly appea  
reth, that the soule, through special  
grace from aboue, may be linked  
miliarly vnto God.

And although it rarely comes for  
passe: yet is it dearely to be accom  
ted of, and not altogether vnknown  
to the louer. And againe, though  
ric hardly: yet may it fall out.

The soule therefore so conioyned  
to God, let no man dare to separate  
or to trouble.

If thou dost wonder at this  
uelous vnion, wonder thou and mar  
uel at the excellencie of his goodnes  
and at the strange & singular vnitin  
of the humane bodie (to his God  
head.)

He may doe what he will, which  
**h Ps.136.4.** onely doth great wonders.

If thou lookest for merits, thou  
shalt

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

e friend shall finde, it is his good pleasure to  
roomne it so.

erie fit O sweet societie with Christ, and  
he he under the wings of Christ!

O gracious coniunction, full of  
will the, and sweetnes of the holy ghost,  
father new which is perceiued better than  
tered!

onies These things belong vnto the soule  
appe that is estranged from all worldly  
special matters, and is not delighted with  
ked in this present life: but is carried aloft  
godly meditation.

es for The more the lower knoweth this,  
ccome the more am I ignorant. Notwith-  
now standing, gladly would I be in pre-  
gh vance when the deuout soule is in such  
in happie case.

oyne And then is she so, when the spouse  
arate and she is together at the noone day.  
ut then it fareth ill with her, and  
mar that verie ill too, if it happen that  
mar efus bee away; if the perfumes of  
dnes grace run not from aboue; if no plea-  
niting ure she take in the holy Bible; if it  
God ee irkesome for her to continue in  
rayer and godly meditation; if the  
which clouds of the heart be so thicke, and  
urtfull cogitations doe so preuaile,  
thou that they cannot be restrained, but  
shale labor to overwhelme in a manner  
all

## The fourth Booke

all the former good things.

O Lord God, why dost thou  
What plaie is this? O blessed lesse  
what meane you heereby?

If it were not offenseue to thine  
honour, I could wish to haue farther  
communication betwene thee, and  
thy beloued.

For so much as thee is so great  
desirous of thy gracious presence  
whereby thee may be nourished with  
chaste delights, I doe much muse  
why sometime you suffer her to  
be so desolate. Thou passest by, and go  
off thy way, as though shee had no  
desire vnto thee. But she is alone  
pensiu. For thus she saith in effect  
*With my soule haue I desired thee in the  
night.*

It is night with her, when thou  
the true light, art not present. So  
that shee prayeth for thy presence  
that the darknesse of sinne compre-  
hend her not. For shee feelerh manie  
fold discommodities: when thy gra-  
tious visitation, is taken from her.  
For, had she not suffered somewhat  
she had neuer so earnestly cried vnto  
thee.

Another also, which was before  
& Psal. 63. 3. *said: cried thus, My soule cleaueth*



unto thee.

But I thinke no trouble is or seemeth so troublesome to her, as the want of thy presence.

And no maruel, if through this want the weard soule doe languish away in sorrow. For thou art verie hardly found at any time : and being found, she reioycest at thy returne, hoping to spend the day merily with thee : but thinking little of thy departure, she suspected no aduersitie to come. But handling another matter secretly, thou often takest thy flight.

For thou departest suddainly out of her hands, when shee cannot lay hold vpon thee.

I doe praise thee : but in this how shall I praise thee ? if thou hast any praise and sweetnesse, why doe you come to forget it in this deed ?

If thou wert not, she might be offended. But shee can take none offence at thee, who so mightily dost loue her.

If therefore any good reason be signified vnder that lesion, O God shew it me.

For gladly would I vnderstand the cause : neither doe I thinke it vnnes-

F sary

*The fourth booke*

farie to learne, though it be but little  
 Because no man of himselfe can  
 behold thy secret iudgements: but  
 is thy light w<sup>ch</sup> dooth both inlighten  
 darke, and drive away hurtfull things.

What therefore may the cause be  
 that sometime so secretly you with-  
 draw your selfe from the soule, thou  
 not witting thereof?

Doe you loue her, or no? If you  
 doe loue her, why then do you leave  
 her, my beloved? If you loue her not  
 why then haue you visited her before  
 time? Againe, if you loue her not  
 why doe you make returne? why  
 knocke you at the doore? why enter  
 you in again? What, is it of lightnesse  
 that you do so both goe and returne  
 God forbid.

But so often change dooth not  
 little grieue her; yea much it dooth  
 disquiet her. Yet the griefe would be  
 the lesler, if thou wouldest say plainly  
 Ioh. 14.28 *lie, I doe goe, and will come vnto you*  
*your hearts shall reioyce, and your ioy*  
 m Ioh. 16.22 *no man shall take from you.*

But now you cast out neuer a  
 word; onely shee thinketh vpon the  
 speech, which she well perceiueth  
 be performed in her selfe, how Ie

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

a Ioh. 8. 19

hid himselfe, and went out of the Temple.

A few things I haue against you, but my complaint doth spring out of a good roote. I humbly request to be instructed, I loue not to contend.

And therefore when occasion ferueth, make answer I beseech you.

Also let the godly soule say for herselfe somewhat for her learning.

Likewise make you answer boldly when your part requireth.

O my soule, answer thou thy be-  
loved boldly. For thy friend will pa-  
tiently heare, and meete thee with  
milde words, that you may suffer none  
condemnation.

For if hee bee not thy comforter,  
who will comfort thee? And who  
more fauourably will beare thine in-  
firmities, than hee which beareth all  
thy sins, & yet is not burdened? And  
in whom more safely can you reueale  
thy miserie, than to him wch perfect-  
ly knowes all things? Or in whom

o Eccles.

23. 19.

P Ioh. 6. 14

may you put more confidence, than  
in the truth which deceiueth not.

Now, if any stranger, or one that  
is not a friend to the spouse, shall  
say these things, let him be driven

*The fourth booke*

from the doores. But if hee loue the spouse, if hee be faithfull, if deuoure & spirituall, let him haue free ingresse.

If hee bee a keeper of good conscience, a louer of vertue and discipline; if hee be pure in heart, and cleere in iudgement; if humble in himselfe, and good towards others; if he can neither wickedly carpe at, vainely extol, rashly reprocue, impudently maintaine, nor proudly commend things; but contrariwise, if he haue learned, both the things which he conceiueth not, to reuerence, and also rightly to interpret obscure and mysticall matters, let him haue entrance, and heare the communication. For the affection of the heart through the sound of words, ought to bee noted, rather than the qualitie of voyces.

And therefore tell me, O soule, how dost thou feel thy selfe, wanting not the grace of thy beloued? I for my part do see that hardly I can take well, if he keepe himselfe long away, and I conceiue the like of you.

If you thinke good, let vs sit heere together, and conferre wee hereof our comfort.

Cha

## of the Imitation of Christ.

## CHAP. 14.

1. A lamentation of the soule for  
the want of grace.

*The heart breaketh  
for desire.*

*a Ps. 117. 20*

What is't thou saist?  
Why saist thou, Zi-  
on, the Lord hath  
forsaken me?

Feare not daughter Sion, thou lo-  
ving & religious soule: to thy king, &  
welbeloued friend commeth to thee.

Arise, stand vp, and behold the ioy  
which commeth toward thee from  
thy God.

S. I haue sought, saith the soule, &  
haue not found<sup>b</sup>, I haue called, and<sup>b</sup>  
he hath not answered, and therefore  
I doe breake for thought.

*b Can. 5.*

M Then said I, this is the voyce of  
the Turtle hauing lost her mate.

It is not now with you as it was  
yesterday, and yerwhile, when you  
sang the songs of myrth.

S. The morning is past, night com-  
meth, and the spouse resteth him-  
selfe at noone tide: yet may I not

*The fourth booke*

come nigh him.

*M.* Your words are sorrowfull, and your eyes shed teares. O soule, thou art grieued, and hast neede of comfort. But speake, whence commeth your griefe?

*S.* I am not troubled either for gold or siluer, or any worldly matter, neither for lucre, nor for hurt, neither for iniurie, nor for pouertie, for I am now dead & crucified to the world.

*M.* If I be not deceiued, long since you renounced the world. But whether in all things perfectly you haue denied the same, and art come euery vnto a verie hatred of your selfe, I would faine know.

*S.* Verie fewe haue that gift, and it is especially looked for at your hands.

*M.* Why therefore are you so pen-siue? What haue you forgone? If it be for your friend his sake, I must needs confesse you doe well to be sad: neither should you take delight in any thing, vntill he returne, and visit you againe.

But in the meane while, how doe you sustaine your selfe vpon the beloued, O sweet soule?

And sure I am hee is not alway present

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

present at a wish. Therefore while he  
is absent, what comfort haue you,  
wherein doe you take delight?

Tell me your secrets, bee they ne-  
uer so gricuous.

That you beare the absence of  
Christ heauily, no man doubteth, but  
he onely that loueth not.

Now you are sad, I take it, not for  
this world, but for the spouse Christ.  
And I know full well that when hee  
shall returne, you will be merry a-  
gaine: because hee will not alwaies  
forget you. For he hath said <sup>eIoh. 14.18</sup>, *I will*  
*not leave you comfortlesse, but I will*  
*come to you.*

Therefore your words are not vain,  
beeing vttered with such griefe, but  
they declare a louing heart, and strike  
the cold affection, which is not infla-  
med with the loue of Christ.

For your voice, is the voice of a Tur-  
tle, not the crying of a murmurer. And  
therefore I trust, you shall finde him,  
whose losse you so lament.

Notwithstanding I demand, What  
say you of him, whose absence you doe  
so bewaile? is he good, or no?

S. Doubtlesse hee is good, and sin-  
gularlie good too<sup>d</sup>, righteous, and <sup>d Mat. 12</sup>  
faith- 16.

*The fourth Booke*

faithfull, in him there is no wicked-  
ness; neither can bee.

e Iob. 34. 10  
f 1. Pet. 2.  
22.

*M.* Why therefore lament you for  
the good, in whom is no deceit?

*S.* I weep not for the good, in respect  
that hee is good: but I lament mine  
owne miserable condition, because I  
haue lost a good and faithfull friend.

I, euen I haue deserued this: but  
alas, alas that I kept not his fauor.

By the lacke, I haue now learned  
what I haue lost. And the absence of  
a friend sheweth, what his presence  
did good.

I was merrie and iocund with him  
but I did no whit consider of his  
speedy departure.

He came skipping vpon the moun-  
taines, hee was ioyfull and iocund in  
the porches of mine house. And  
straightway I vnlocked the doores of  
the flesh, and let in the beloued vnto  
me. I did sit, and rested within vnder  
his shadow from the haile and raine.  
And it did me much good to haue  
his company.

Why should I not reioyce? He is  
my ioye, and the comfort of mine  
heart.

Ah, what had I? And what the



did I possesse?

I am not able to utter, how well I prospered then: neither is it convenient that I should. I could not desire more than I had, hee being present whom alone I loved.

Oh, how did I loue, when I despised both my selfe, and all things beside.

I had either little or no care at all of any thing that might delight me, for I was rauished with loue of him, and whatsoever was not my beloued, I loathed as altogether vnauoric. But he being taken away, I am in a manner cleane out of heart.

For my soule depended vpon his grace, because I had none other comfort besides him, whose absence I do thus lament. He did content me, and was sufficient to the making of true mirth indeed.

As I would, so was he, and whatsoever he enioyned me, I took it in good part, and I consecrated my selfe wholly and frankly to his will. So that there was a good agreement, & great quietnesse betweene vs.

No man durst be so bold as to interrupt our silence, when hee had commanded so through my mouth.

*The fourth booke*

L. I charge you, O daughters of Ierusalem, by the Roes, and by the Hindes of the felde, that yee stir not vp, nor waken my Loue, vntill shee please.

Sal. S. 2. 7.

S. Now therefore note, if you bee able to conceiue my words, what great cause I haue to lament the absence of my friend, by whose presence I began to bee so rich with all good things.

M. Heereunto I answered, I know well what you say: by often experience I haue proued so much as you speake.

But, let vs comfort our selues in this, that the dispensation of his will is the increase of our zeale, and deuotion.

And now I haue receiued with thanketulnesse that which you haue uttered: notwithstanding, I would more thoroughly haue them beaten into mine head. For they which be hard of conceiuing, are often to be told of a matter.

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

## CHAP. 15.

1. Touching the fruit of friendship.
2. The benefits of Christ upon man.
3. The true felicitie and ioy of the soule.
4. The affinitie betweene Christ and the soule of man.



*Dearest* Raised bee God  
which hath not put  
back my prayer fro  
me.

Therefore I am <sup>a Psal. 56. 20</sup>  
now again zealous-  
ly to enquire, if your friend at any  
time left you without inward com-  
fort.

What meane you? What muse you  
heere about? How also may hee be  
reconciled and reclaimed?

Of all friendship, I beseech you, O  
deare and beloued soule to Christ,  
conceale none of these things which  
I am to demand of you.

You may so doe me a pleasure, in o-  
pening to me your godly cogitations.

By your talke, I shall bee able to  
measure the waight of my griefe,  
whether iustly or without cause I was  
pensive.

For

*The fourth Booke*

For I haue seene you sometime merrie, and somtime sad, and by and by glad againe, and by you I did somewhat consider of my selfe.

But I suppose the chiefeſt cauſe of this your alteration is, that returning & departure of the beloued The which hath made mee, perceiuing how you haue run ouer many matters, for mine instruction to reſort vnto you.

S. According to your deſire, I will bend my ſelfe ſomewhat to vntolde the things which I feele within mee, both when I am with my friend, and alſo when I am alone, looking for him whom I ſo do loue.

This firſt vnderſtand, I reape not ſo much ioy & pleaſure by his preſence, but I finde as much ſorrow and bitterneſſes through his abſence.

But why it pleaſeth him ſo to come and go, rather I had he ſhould declare than I.

But you ſhall heare it when I haue finiſhed the wordes of my ſong, becauſe in the ende wee will bring him in vnto vs: and fitting among vs, hee ſhall teach vs his order, the which he viſeth to ſhew vnto ſuch as deſire his preſence.

In the meane while giue attentie  
 are vnto mee, and bee not offended  
 at mine homely speech.

For wee are now come together to  
 stirre vp our hearts, & either to weepe  
 together, or through loue to reioyce  
 together.

For woe vnto him that is alone <sup>b</sup>, be- <sup>b</sup> Ec. 4. 10  
 cause when hee falleth into some sor-  
 row, or temptation, there is not a second  
 to lift him vp. And if two be together,  
 they wil comfort one the other; while  
 one being sad, the other minnstreth  
 joy: or if hee refuse to be comforted,  
 he shall bee pitied forthwith, & griefe  
 will be taken for his griefe: and so it  
 will fall out that either they will both  
 be glad, or both sad together. And al-  
 though some sorrow do yet still con-  
 tinue for some aduersity, or matter of  
 sorrow: yet the more patiently they  
 beare it, because their hearts bee so  
 linked, that nothing can change or al-  
 ter their minds.

Now, who seeing this faithfull con-  
 cord of minds, but must needs breake  
 into these wordes, and say <sup>c</sup> Behold <sup>c</sup> Psal. 133. 3  
 how good and how comely a thing it is,  
 brethren to dwelle euē together.

And therefore I can the more  
 boldly

*The fourth booke*

boldly tell you what I think, because he  
dread no deceipt, or subtiltie in you.

Lo, this all sweet spouse, and be-  
loved friend, our Lord Iesus Christ be-  
d Wis. 11. 33 the louer of holy soules<sup>d</sup>, euend  
pure loue, not able otherwise to de-  
allured me vnto him; and when I wand-  
e A&. 17. 22 not, hee gaue mee life<sup>e</sup>, wisdom<sup>f</sup>  
and power to beholde this common Fu-  
light.

Hee gaue me grace to bee borne  
anew by Baptisme, and adorned  
me with to roabe of his precious  
merits,

Ouer and besides, when afterwar-  
I had foully bespotted my selfe with  
sinne, and was far vnfit to loue him,  
he cast not his eye on my filthinesse,  
but vpon the side of his mercies.

For when as yet I wandered out  
theway, he reclaimed me of his good-  
nes<sup>f</sup>, not suffering mee to perishe  
this wicked world.

Moreover, he hath prouided me  
a place to rest in so long as I liue  
this mortall bodie.

Nothwithstanding, this dwelling  
vnder the shadow of the beloved,  
not the true rest, nor the rest which  
shall for euer continue; but that shall

*of the Imitation of Christ*

because the true rest, which we shall feele after  
in your labors of this present life 8.

and be yet for the soule to perceiue her selfe

g Rev. 21.4

Christ bee vnburdened of worldly cares,  
euene and there to rest where shee may the  
to deembre fully serue her beloued, & at-  
n I waied vpon him in the secret chamber  
edom of silence, it is a kind of comfort.

Furthermore, my friend hath not  
rest, but assisted mee in my diuers  
e born troubles, and sorest tentations.

Also hee hath both instructed mee  
reious tentimes with profitable sermons,  
and confirmed me in his word.

And as young plants are wont to  
be watered with shoures: so he hath  
e him watered mee with inward comfort,  
innes that the vertue newly implanted  
es. within me may not wither.

And he said to me, if thou hast a  
good lust vnto mee, and wilt hearken vnto  
erish me, thou shalt enioy good things; if  
thou wilt doe whatsoever I command  
ed mee, thou art a friend of mine<sup>h</sup>.

h Iohn. 15.

liue in. If thou wilt choose mee, and loue 14.

me aboute all things, all things that  
well you aske, my father will giue you:  
ed, but if you forgoe me, then shalt thou  
which come to destruction, for my wrath  
that shall bee incensed against thee; if  
thou.

*The fourth Booke*

thou seekest after another, he shal not  
please thee long, but thou wilt loathe  
and abhor him. Because I am the sal-  
uation, and the life of the soule i.

i Ioh. 14. 6

Ioh. 11. 25.

S. So I turned me vnto him which  
had done me good, & expelling from  
out my selfe the dust of earthly affec-  
tions, I decreed in mine heart from  
thenceforth to serue him onely : be-  
cause I found nothing better than  
him, nor could imagine any couenant  
more profitable.

Let others yet, & seeke what friend-  
ship they wil elsewhere, I am thorough-  
ly perswaded this is the true man  
the soule, for whose sake mee think  
could gladly forsake this world, to  
enjoy his loue euerlastingly.

And therefore I stucke vnto him  
for he liked me still : neither could  
finde a better friend.

For my soule alway hath exceed-  
ingly desired such a one, as is the  
greatest for power, the best for good-  
nes, the worthiest for dignitie, and  
the most happy for all good things.

And because he is verie courteous  
hee gaue mee comfortable words  
warily foreseeing that they should  
neither terrifie, nor breake me  
through



*of the Imitation of Christ.*

through ouer-much roughnesse, but rather enioyne and teach mee that which should bee both light, & sweete to be borne, that so my yong affection might the better be drawne on, and the more forceably addicted to the friend beloued, & not shrinke backe. She shall the better, said he, be instructed, and profit, if not by force, but through gentlenesse she be provoked forward. She will the more easily receiue my yoake rather by loue with rewards, than by feare with punishment. And if she neede impulsion, let it wisely bee vsed, that violence do not ouerthrowe her. For he knew right well what was best for a young plant, and what profit this his kindnes would bring vnto mee, especially at the time of tryall, when I should easily call into my remembrance the good things which the first he did vnto my soule, and hereby take courage to proceede in the battell. Hee would not straightway open vnto me, what & how much trouble was to endure in his seruice: but sometime hee tempered aduersitie with prosperitie, wel considering my weak-

*The fourth booke*

weaknes at the first, vntill through experience I had gotten strength to endure affliction.

After all this he carried me about instructed, and bore mee vpon his shoulders.

He conducted mee over the holy Scripture, & with the heate of his holy Spirit hee armed mee against the wicked tentations of Sathan.

Moreouer, hee placed before mine eyes examples of all the vertues, namely, the holy Patriarches, & Prophets besides the glorious lights of the new Testament.

Euen as a Mother teacheth her little childe, so he instructed me, breaking spirituall shells, and putting the kernels into my iawes, because they were sweet to be eaten.

Search if you can what they signifie, and where such may be found.

Open the Apostolicall book, read aduisedly, and see if you are able to comprehend so great mysteries.

Peruse the Prophet Isaiah; look into the Gospel, the light of all lights & marke if they doe not yeelde me pleasant notes of themselves.

In them whatsoeuer you find which

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

which is obscure, and hard to be understood, that is a nut in a shell.

But if you heare it expounded, and understand that which afore you did not, then broken is the shell, and the sweetnes of the nut doth sauer in the heart. And so are wee to iudge of other darke sentences. Whereby you may behold so many nuts, as you see hidden sentences.

And how, thinke you, did he beare me on his shoulders? That hee did, often as he beheld mine infirmities, and yet neither cast me off, nor despised me, but patiently and mercifully did beare with me.

k 2.Pet.3.9

Againe, hee did beare mee on his shoulders, when he made other men to beare with mine infirmities, & whatever was blame-worthy within mee.

Besides, yet more louingly he did beare me on his shoulders, when he bare his crosse vnto the place, called the place of dead mens sculs, where I was crucified. For then was I a

Ioh. 19. 17

more heauie burthen vnto him, than the crosse was? And my finnes were more grieuous to his bones, than his wood of the crosse to his backe.

1. Pet. 3.

because for my sake that crosse was carried,

carried,

*The fourth Booke*

n Esa. 55. 5 carried <sup>n</sup>, not for his owne sake.

6.

Oh, how is he about all things  
bee loued, and to be worshiped, by  
whose grace and merits I am thus

o Luk. 15. 4

s. &c.

p Gal. 3. 13

both found out <sup>o</sup>, and redeemed  
And therefore he shall be as deare to  
me, as the child is to his mother.

But well I know, that I am far vn-  
meet to loue him: Notwithstanding  
my boldnes cometh from his good-  
nes. Neither could I doe otherwile  
but run vnto his most friendly em-  
bracements, when he shewed himself  
so kinde vnto me.

9 1 Sam. 18  
18.

I do wel remember what the Pro-  
phet Dauid in a certaine place doth  
say *What am I? and what is my life,  
the family of my father in Israel, that  
should be sonne in lawe to the King?*

But our affinitie together is much  
more excellent, than this of Dauid  
and Saul. Because ours is a pure and  
sincere kindred, not with flesh and  
blood, but betweene God himselfe,  
betweene faith vnuolated, and a  
good conscience.

Of this did that Disciple whom  
Iesus loued, speake on this wise:

11. Ioh. 4. 4

*Greater is hee that is in you, than hee  
that is in the world.*

For

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

For God is loue, and loue bringeth forth this kindred.

Therefore sith Dauid thought himselfe farre vnmeet to be sonne in law vnto an earthly King. much more abashed ought I to be, to enter into alliance with the King of all kings, that vouchsafeth to allure me, vile wretch, into his friendship.

So that he hath dealt with me, not according to my deserts, but euen as it seemed good in his mercifull eyes.

Oh blessed, and happy art thou, soule, now thou art fast bound with the chaine of the heavenly loue.

Oh how noble, and free art thou, seeing thou art priuie euen to the sighings of so holy copulation.

But seeing I haue spent many words about the beloued, and yet haue not answered fully vnto your demaund,

let vs now begin afresh, and God grant that our speech may

be both to our comfort and profit.

## The fourth booke

## Chap. 16.

1. The more wee loue Christ, the more  
we may. 2. Tentation and when.  
3. Happinesse of the life to  
come. 4. How to beare  
affliction.



<sup>a</sup> Psa. 123. 2

**B**ehold, as the eyes of ser-  
uants looke vnto the  
bands of their master: so  
as the eyes of a maide  
vnto the hand of her ma-  
stris<sup>a</sup>: so mine eyes are fixed contin-  
ally vpon my friend.

<sup>b</sup> Ioh. 15. 5

Since first I began to loue him, I ha-  
d a gteat desire to continue with  
him. And this mine intent liked him  
wel, & hee allowed the same, saying  
He that abideth in me, and I in him,  
the same bringeth forth much fruit.

But that the truth, the strenght, and  
the purity of my loue might appeare,  
it was behoouefull that I should be  
tempted. And so I could not be, vn-  
lesse he both suffered the same, and  
hid himselfe.

<sup>c</sup> Psa. 119.

73.

And, because tentation serued  
both for the purging of the inner  
man<sup>c</sup>, and for the fruitfull bringing  
forth

Worth of vertue ; & also for the better  
perceiuing the spiritual graces of god,  
was tried, & exercised therewithall  
How strongly and how often hee  
ang me this way and that way, my  
god and Lord, which knoweth all  
secrets <sup>d</sup>, and is a witnesse to euerie <sup>d</sup> Eccle. 23  
triuie cogitation of the heart <sup>e</sup>, and <sup>19.</sup>  
all seeth mee, and perceiueth how I <sup>e</sup> Act. 15. 8  
in nothing else but a fraile creature <sup>f</sup>,  
when he knoweth right well. <sup>f</sup> Psal. 139. 11

If therefore he had not assisted me,  
when I was extreemly afflicted,  
doubtlesse I had perished <sup>g</sup>, being <sup>g</sup> Psal. 119.  
readie to fall into the pit of desperati- <sup>92.</sup>

n. But he whose manner is to com-  
fort the troubled in spirit <sup>h</sup>, tooke <sup>h</sup> Psal. 34. 18  
mercy vpon me.

For it God helped & assisted not,  
who were able to beare so manifold  
tribulations.

And therefore it was of his great  
mercies that I stood before the face  
of such troublesome tempests : and  
so it is of the same his goodnesse,  
that still I doe stand and fall not.

But heereof I may not vaine-  
ly boast, so long as I liue in this mortall  
bodie.

For though I see the element is  
now

*The fourth booke*

now cleere, yet doe I not thinke  
long it will continue quiet. For  
winde sodainly will arise, & that  
pely when we thinke least thereof

So that by so much I perceue I  
neede my friend his assistance,  
how much I perceiue I doe lie open  
on all sides to troubles.

We shall be quiet no where but  
1. Reu. 21. 4. heauen<sup>1</sup>, where my friend doth see  
his elect with ioy and exultation.

But when there? What can I speake  
thereof? Scarce can I think any thing  
therof, & that not evidently enough  
and enter therein I may not.

Oh that hee would come, and  
mee in that all glorious, quiet, and  
fruitfull pasture of his Saints, where  
neither Sathan is, nor danger to be  
feared.

As yet I toile in the sea, and where  
ther I shall attaine vnto the port of  
saluation by reason of my troubles  
arising through so many contrary  
windes, I am vterly ignorant.

So that I am altogether out of  
quiet. Notwithstanding, it is a thing  
and comfort vnto mee, that I still  
behold the light of faith, that with



*of the Imitation of Christ.*

ke all submission I seeke the fauour of  
 For my beloued, that I beare toward him  
 at ha constant hope, that I will not bee  
 root separated from his loue <sup>k</sup>, and that <sup>k</sup> Ro.8.35:  
 I doe rest vpon his prouidence, and  
 uel insearchable goodnesse, more than  
 e, vpon my selfe.

And therefore, though too too of-  
 ten I doe stagger, yea, and fall too  
 e but sometime into sinne, yet I am not to  
 h feet despair, but rather continually to  
 on. I ye vnto him and to cry,

I spe O Lord my GOD, haue mercie  
 y thin vpon me, and suffer me not to perish  
 noug through my manifold tentations, but  
 I I assist me faithfully, that valiantly I  
 and may resist and overcome,

t, Reach out thy right hand vnto  
 whe the worke of thine owne hands <sup>1</sup>, oh <sup>1</sup> Iob 14.15  
 er to thou which triest mee by Satan, and <sup>2</sup> Psal.95.7.  
 I I test mee oftentimes on thy left  
 d whe and.

port And if any such temptation shall  
 rouble come, as will stay mee from crying  
 ntranc into the Lord, then will I sigh from  
 he bottome of mine heart. For he  
 out knoweth euen the verie secrets of  
 a shie the heart <sup>m</sup>, and is priue to the gro- <sup>m</sup> Psal.7.9.  
 still ngs of the spirit <sup>n</sup>. It is not his will <sup>n</sup> Rom.8.  
 t with at any one euen of the least should <sup>16,27.</sup>

## The fourth booke

Mat. 18. perith. Oh, how great was his goodnesse to me-ward, in that it pleased him to bee present with mee in my trouble, when I did not know, nor could marke so much! For often hee preserved mee from being vtterly giuen ouer vnto my wicked affections.

Through his secret iudgement it came to passe now & then, that I felt and was foiled euen in trifles, that I might not waxe proud, and be high minded for great things, but learn through humiliation, how I was nothing euen then when I seemed to stand vpright, and to flourish.

And therefore I wish you not to be over-rashly, or quickly to commend mee, though I seeme to prosper in your sight, but reserve all praise vntill the good day of my death, when I shall rather praise the Lord, and not myself.

Giue the glorie vnto G O D and to his high, which assisted mee in all my tentations.

For hee deliuered mee of his mercie manie a time, when I was taken of mine enemies.

Also when they came as a whirlwinde to destroy mee, hee sent his arrows, and scattered them.

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

and he encreased lightnings and ap-  
 palled them, so that they left me for  
 a time. Because hee would not haue  
 mee to bee without that, which from  
 time to time hee hath acquainted his  
 Saints withall. So that I had after-  
 ward a little quietnesse, and peace, by  
 the meanes of my friend.

1 Act. 14.

22.

Esa. 34. 19.

Whereupon, I did betake mee not  
 vnto bodily, or worldly, but vnto  
 spirituall ease, beholding the earth a  
 far off, & casting my thoughts vpon  
 the secrets of heauen.

2 Col. 3. 1. 2.

I gaue diligence to see what man-  
 ner of person I am, and how I might  
 best please him, which had reuealed  
 vnto mee so many tokens of loue, far  
 beyond all deserts of mine.

And so much as in mee lay, I wi-  
 shed continually for this ioyfull  
 peace, the better to cleaue vnto him,  
 and to serue him the more freely.

But many times the soule hath not  
 her desire: but sometime it is granted,  
 sometime vpon good consideration  
 is deferred.

For who would not wish still to  
 dwell vnder the shade of the beloued,  
 if it might bee granted him, and if  
 time and place were conuenient;

G 2

But

*The fourth Booke*

But now my friend worketh with me  
again.

I feele not affliction alway, neyther  
yet doe I enioy continuall rest, but by  
an euening & morning a day is made.

For this mortall life is spent in  
comming and going both through  
prosperity and aduersity.

Acts 14.

22.

y Iob 7.18.

This was in the mind of that Saint  
which said :

*Thou dost visit him in the morning  
and triest him euery moment.*

Notwithstanding, it seemeth  
kinde of rest, if the enemy doe neyther  
too oft, nor too importunately  
assaile.

And therefore when it shall be  
granted mee euen a little to rest  
my selfe sweetely in my beloued, I will  
take it in good part, and reioyce,  
will reioyce, I say, yea and alway  
reioyce for that grace of God.

Moreouer, it maketh me bold  
to pray vnto him in all my necessities  
because he hath freely preuented me  
so oftentimes with his mercifull  
visitation.

For when hee doth but approach  
minding to keepe holy day with  
mee, euen then sodainly there

Chap. 16. 125 When God cometh, sing goeth;  
*of the Imitation of Christ.*

meth a light ouer mine heart; which  
forthwith drieth out the clouds of  
all wicked cogitations, whereby I do  
enjoy the long desired cleernesse of  
God his light.

Because no vnclean, nor filthy thing  
can stand where hee entred in <sup>z</sup>, for <sup>z</sup> Ret. 21.  
hee loueth puritie <sup>a</sup>, & is the lagrasser <sup>27.</sup>  
of the same; so that of necessitie all sa- <sup>a</sup> Mat. 5.8.  
tanical illusion, together with the  
pomps of this world, must bee pack-  
ing.

Therefore my passions & tentations  
which I did endure, being suppres-  
sed, I began both the more evidently  
to know, and the more earnestly to  
loue, and the more heartily to praise  
him, for vouchsafing at the length to  
beat back the damned crew of the  
wicked from assailing me.

For they doe disturb my peace, and  
sin doth so shut vp my mouth, that I  
am ashamed to speake vnto my wel-  
beloued.

But in vaine doe they bend them-  
selues against his power and wise-  
dome, because euen in a moment he  
can slide downe into mine heart, and  
poure in secretly good motions, that  
I may both contemne, and viterly

## The fourth booke

neglect all their priuie whisperings.

O my faithfull, & all happie friend,  
take me so vnto thee, whensoever  
thou shalt perceiue mine affections  
to be either pressed down at any time  
with the weight of sin, or to bee held  
with vnnecessary busines, that I may  
not wander far astray from thee after  
the swarme of wicked cogitations, &  
so ouerhastily bee deprived of thy  
grace, without which I shall not bee  
able to enioy thy friendship.

For thou art my Lord, and my  
 5 Mat. 4. 10 God, which by thy word doest both  
 heale and sanctifie; which holdest  
 2 Psal. 66. 9. my soule in life, and sufferest not  
 my feete to slip, but deliuerest mee  
 from the euill day, and from the  
 snares of death.

Oh, how many haue bin cast off,  
and vterly perished, that haue bin  
much more innocent than I am!

And therefore my soule, praise  
thou the Lord, and all that is within  
mee blesse his holy Name.

2 Psal. 103.  
A. 2.

My soule, I say, praise thou the  
Lord, and forget not all his benefites.

It is all too little, and far vnsuffici-  
ent whatsoeuer thou shalt either  
thinke, or speake, or promise to his  
praise.

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

praise. For he exceedeth all praise, & is much sweeter than anie musicke.

Wherefore my soule cleaueth to thee alone, and loueth thee above all other gifts, notwithstanding it be exceedingly beautifull and sweete which of mere good will thou hast sent vnto me.

For thou alone art the Spouse: as Mat. 9. 15 for all things else they are gifts, and arguments of loue.

In stead of thee I will not loue them; neither will I beleue that anie thing, or all things in the world can suffice mee, if I haue not thee: for in so doing, I may perchance forgoe thee with them too.

Thou giuest me leaue to vse many things for thy sake; but I may not enioy so much as one thing in thy stead.

[Exo. 10. 21]

And therefore, O Christ my sweet Spouse, I haue preferred thee afore all other things, and my care hath beene above all things to loue thee.

Wherefore grant that blessedly I may enioy thee, and in that vnion euerlastingly to triumph in happines together with thee.

But how farre am I come? I haue

*The fourth Booke*

lengthened my speech more than perhaps you would. But pardon me, good friend. For I haue been carried aloft through the loue of my especiall, & only friend; and would to God it would please him stil to lift vp both me and you too, in contemplation.

Let him prouide an heauenly ascension, but let vs not keepe a base going downe:

M. Aske you me, whether I am forsaken at any time of my beloued?

S. Yea, I say so.

M. But how doe you behaue your selfe in trouble?

S. I take all things as patiently as I can, expecting his comming.

Naturally I am grieved: but as touching my spirit, I haue inward patience; that my griefe proue not incurable. For I forget not, how he that loneth liueth in paine.

**Rom. 1. 17.** I liue by Faith; I beleene the holy Scriptures; I giue credit to the words of comfort. And although I endure affliction: yet I doubt not, neither indeed ought I to doubt, but that God (when it pleaseth him) can send me ease.

For true, and to bee credited are those



*of the Imitation of Christ.*

those wordes which are declared.  
Because the very Saints themselves  
haue beene exercised in many, and  
proued in like things.<sup>b.</sup>

h. Heb. 12.

4.5.6.

Nature continually doth wish for  
quietnes, & seeketh to be comforted  
in some thing: but the spirit notwith-  
standing is readie to sustaine whatso-  
euer the wil of God is I should endure.<sup>i.</sup> i Mar. 14.

If therfore I shall be lesse zealous,  
and lesse willing to do good, my pu-  
nishment shall be the more gricuous.  
*Though he slay me, saith the wise man,*  
*yet will I trust in him.*

38.

k. Iob 13.

If I loue vertues, patience is a great  
vertue: therefore let patience euer-  
more bee retained. For the more  
praise we purchase, the more paines  
we take in bringing things to passe.

And that our vertue may bee pro-  
ued, and made the more glorious, we  
are commonly exercised by contrarie  
euents.

Therefore whensoever any such  
triall shal happen, be not out of heart,  
neither fall downe; but retaine thou  
patience, and extoll the righteousness  
of God. The Lord is not so hard and  
pitiless, that he can suffer you to a-  
bide long vncomforted.

G 5

Only

## The fourth booke

11. Cor. 10.  
20,

Onely haue a care, that you nei-  
ther lament immoderately, nor yet  
murmure against the righteous and  
iust God, because you are forsaken,  
lest the wicked spirit doe send vnto  
you more grieuous tentations of  
your faith, whereby being ouer feare-  
full, you shall extreemly be afflicted.

Wherefore beare a little, and sup-  
presse your sorrow, although the  
griefe both of your heart and bodie  
be neuer so great.

Abide constant in that good pur-  
pose, which at the first you intended  
to keepe. For it is good, & specially  
such an extremitie, to cast all confi-  
dence vpon the beloved.

Looke thou patiently for God his  
heauenly comfort, so shall you spee-  
dily perceiue a speciall fauour and  
sight of God.

Lo, you haue a faithfull witnesse  
saying <sup>m</sup>, I waited patiently for the  
Lord, and hee inclined vnto mee, and  
heard my crie,

And that in your neede you may  
finde the like fauour, I doe wish you  
both earnestly to pray your selfe  
and desire others to pray for you  
also, and so commit your selfe wholly

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

to his will and ordinance, that hee  
may deale with you even as it shall  
please him; and say to him with a  
good conscience: In thine hands are  
my workes, thou knowest how it go-  
eth with mee; thou knowest what I  
suffer: and now if it bee thy will, I  
shall speedily be comforted.

Notwithstanding, let that be done  
which seemeth right, and good in thine  
eyes, and haue mercy on me, a deso-  
late, and miserable wretch, pitiously  
complaining vnto thee.

If therefore thou continue in pa-  
tience and long suffering, and for  
a little trouble, swerue not from the  
faith and love in Iesus Christ, assure  
your selfe the brightness of God his  
favour will returne, and illuminate  
thee most gloriously with his beams  
of spirituall comfort. And so the be-  
loved at his returne shall bee more  
deare vnto thee, than if he had neuer  
been absent.

For the sentence of God his dis-  
pleasure is not past calling back; nei-  
ther is he so offended, that hee may  
not be reconciled againe.

Doubtlesse hee will speedily, and  
easily bee at one with thee, if thou  
gives:

*The fourth Booke*

gine diligence, & promise afterward both to be more carefull that you sin not, & earnest to lead a vertuous life.

If thou wilt yeeld to these wholesome admonitions, doubt you not, thy beloued will be with you as afore, and at his presence you will receiue much comfort, saying a,

a Ps. 31. 19.

*How great is thy goodnes, which thou hast laid vp for them that feare thee! which thou hast don for them which trust in thee! vnder the shadow of thy wings thou wilt protect them.*

O Zion, thou shalt be renued, & see thy King which is to reigne in thee.

o Dan. 2. 37

Thy beloued is the King of power, whose hinder parts are in the paleness of gold, but his head is pure gold.

Thus much may suffice to be said for your comfort.

As for other things concerning the change of the beloued, namely how hee appeareth sometime, and sometime runneth to and fro, in the next discourse you shall receiue, and heare them euen from his own mouth.

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

CHAP. 17.

1. The maiesty, and omnipotencie of  
God. 1. *How, and why the Lord affli-*  
*cteth his children.*



*Marvelous are thy works,*  
*and my soule knoweth*  
*it right well.*

a Psal. 139

How is it O my be-  
loued, that I am thus  
dealt withal? Why hast

14.

thou forsaken me? Answer, I beseech  
thee,

Thou didst leaue me, & wentest, &  
camest againe. And herein thou did-  
dest well. For hadst thou not made a  
speedy returne, I had fainted wel-nie:  
but thou tookest compassion vpon  
me, being priuy to all my secrets.

For through your departure I was  
very sad: and now for your returne I  
am glad againe.

Notwithstanding, for my learning  
sake, tell, what good meaning had  
you therein? What auaileth it you so  
to leaue, and afflict me?

Take you pleasure in hearing? *Tar-* b Luke 24.  
*ry with vs, for it is towards night.* b. 29.

O conie, and sit among vs; for lo, I  
and

*The fourth booke*

& another disciple are verie desirous to heare you, speake, and we heartily pray you to instruct vs.

Speake boldly what it shall please you, & if you think good, turne your speech vnto mee. I doe heare none with such pleasure as I doe you. And whosoever else doth speak, his speech is gratefull, and well listened vnto of mee, for your sake that speake within him. And therefore your speech shall bee to mee more sweete, than either the honie, or the honie combe: For they passe in sweetnesse all other words,

Let now your voice sound in mine eares.

So then the voice of the beloved thundered and said:

e. Esa. 45.  
19.

L. I am the Lord which speak righteousnesse; And who is like mee in counsaile and wisdom?

d. Esa. 45.  
7, 8.

Who made the sea, and the drie land? I, the Lord, forming the light, and creating the darknesse.

e. Psal. 7. 9.

Who hath entred into the sea, and brought forth waters out of the deepe? Euen I, the Lord, which search the hearts, and the reines.

Who hath knowne all things past, and

from and is priue to the things to come? f Wis. 12. 17  
Euen I; the Lord, which haue done  
all things in measure, number, and  
weight f.

I am the Creatour both of heauen  
and earth <sup>g</sup> by the ruler of this world <sup>h</sup>, g Esa. 42. 1  
the knower of hidden things <sup>i</sup>, the h 2. Ti. 1. 17  
reuealer of secrets <sup>k</sup>, the possessor of i Reu. 3. 15.  
the whole world <sup>l</sup>, and the beholder k Eccl. 42. 20  
of the causes of all particulars. l Mat. 10. 26

I am God, and change not <sup>m</sup>, who m Mal. 3. 6.  
haue continually with me the causes  
of all changes in the world.

I am God the Almighty <sup>n</sup> whose n Gen. 35. 11  
power is inuincible <sup>o</sup>; I am God the o Reu. 4. 8.  
most High <sup>p</sup>, whose highnesse can- p Reu. 11. 17.  
not bee attained <sup>q</sup>: I am God, the q Rom. 9. 19  
most Righteous <sup>r</sup>, whose being can- r Esa. 14. 14  
not be conceived <sup>s</sup>. s Psal. 139.

I am for my presence euery where <sup>t</sup>, t Mat. 19. 17  
and yet no where to be seen <sup>u</sup>. u Iob 11. 7. 8

I am the most spirituall, and far- &c.  
thest from the senses of man <sup>x</sup>. x Psal. 139.

I beare all things, yet neuer bur- y Iob 23. 8.  
dened <sup>y</sup>, and I fil and rule each place, y 9.  
and yet vnstretched, z Ioh. 1. 18.

I behold both things past, & things y Heb. 1. 3.  
to come alike, as though they were z Wis. 8. 8.  
present <sup>z</sup>. z Eccl. 42. 10.

I surpasse all creatures both spiri-  
tuall.

*The fourth Booke*

a Ps. 35. 10. tuall, and coporall.

I am diuerſly to be named: yet no thought is able to conceiue mee as I am.

I ſhewe my ſelfe ſuddenly, and ſooth-with when one would little thinke, I am gone againe.

b 1. Tim. 6.  
16.

I am indeed the inuiſible God, which after a thouſand waies declare my preſence to my friends.

And thus I ſpake vnto the louing ſoule.

I wil hide my face for a little ſeaſon. I will forſake her for a while, to ſee if her loue bee pure, and vnſained.

It is a great matter to loue vnſainedly. For that is to loue mee neither for her owne ſake, nor for any temporall commoditie, or ſpirituall comfort; but to loue mee, and mee only, and that for mine owne ſake, and that to the end, & that in hope of nothing at mine hands.

It is not in euery one thus to loue mee; but this prerogatiue of pure louing, is proper onely to the perfect ſoule.

But ſhe that is yet vnperfect, hath great need often to be proued, and exerciſed, that ſhee may knowe both how



*of the Imitation of Christ.*

how much she loueth mee, and how  
yet she greatly she despiseth her selfe.

For you said in your heart, Truly  
I doe loue (Christ) yea, and often  
you repeate the same thing, I loue  
him indeed.

But I credit not words, or thoughts  
only. For I will make due tryall of  
that loue.

When I am present, and speake  
with you; when I either put, or encrease  
good motions in the minde; when  
I grant prosperity most commonly  
to pleasure, then can you say with all  
euournes, *O my beloued, I do loue you.*  
And you say well. For I am greatly  
to be loued, & you are at no time ei-  
ther to think, or speak otherwise than  
kindly, and honourably of me.

But for prosperity, & good turnes  
only to loue & to comend me, what  
great thing is it? Because euen sinners  
be the same. For when they haue re-  
ceiued what naughtily they craued,  
they oftentimes blesse mee for the  
same. But praise is not seemly in the  
mouth of the sinner <sup>d</sup>.

<sup>d</sup> Eccclus.

He therefore which either for some  
profit, or comfort receiued, doth  
loue mee, doth no more than a co-  
ueticous

15.9.

## The fourth booke

netous man doth. But exceede him  
I say, exceed him, and proceede vnto  
greater righteousnesse.

Be ashamed still to bee weake and  
tender; learne to care mans meete  
bee not still fed with the milke of  
children.

Attaine thou to the companie of  
the stout Davids, that can hold both  
speare, and sword, and shield.

¶ Luk. 9. 23. Take vp the crosse, & follow me.

Make haste to bee in the number  
of them which haue learned to beare  
diuers afflictions, and much banish-  
ment for my name sake. You are too  
much giuen vnto ease.

I purpose to trye you, and to turne  
vnto the other side, that you may  
know what you can suffer, least you  
seeme ouer-innocent and holy by  
your owne conceipt.

Tribulation, and anger, and much  
heauie displeasure, together with  
sore tentations of wicked spirits, shall  
come vpon you. Some vniustly shall  
spoyle you of your goods; others  
shall take no compassion vpon you;  
others shall defame; others shall  
sift; others shall ouercharge; and  
others shall carrie you perforce whitherso-  
uer they will.

*of the Imitation of Christ*

de him whether you would not goe; some out-  
wardly, others inwardly, shall trou-  
ble you. Some shall be aduanced yn-  
ke an high degree, and honour, but you  
meere shall be left vnto reproaches, and en-  
like o cure seruile paines. In all these, yea  
and in greater things, you shall be  
roued, whether you are a valiant  
ld boe ouldier of mine, or no.

I will depart and not giue ouer,  
w me till I haue made sufficient tryall,  
umbe whether you blesse mee to my face.

o bea Now if I find, that from the heart  
banis faintly you doe loue mee, and  
are t continually do praise my Name, then  
it meete that from thenceforth I  
o turne all you Spouse, and that you shall  
u ma haue a secret chamber with me.

ast y But if I perceiue that you cannot  
noly beare my correction, but will iudge  
my punishment to be ouer-sharp, and  
d mi all bewaile mine absence, wishing  
w me for mee with heartie and earnest de-  
s, the re, I will send you my staffe, that  
y shal you may arise thereby, and after-  
o che ward my selfe will come, and restore  
a you ou againe vnto my wonted fauour.  
hall For it is not my will that you should  
re; utterly faint; because him that lo-  
e wh ch me, I will loue to the end.

f Ioh. 13. 1.

And

*The fourth booke*

And although your loue be not perfect as could be wished ; yet I will not despise you, but prouide that you may grow on in louing. For my care is that you doe well ; and therefore mistrust me not.

I know what you can endure; which maketh me to temper my course, that you bee not tempted aboue your strength, and so faint.

And if I stay, in your opinion, some what too long, looke for me vntill the day of my visitation. For comming I will come, & performe my promise.

Be you still in prayer, still meditating vpon the holy Scripture, and alway be patient, and suffer.

I am not ignorant but your grief will bee much : but so quickly to be ouerthrowne, & to bee out of all hope of my returne, I cannot like that.

g Eccles.  
23.19.

Where is your faith ? A great faith you had neede of, especially on this behalfe : for although you see not mee, yet are you seene of mee &, in whose hands you are to commend both your selfe, and all that you haue.

For although you are not privie to my iudgements : yet hauing a strong faith

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

with, you must of necessity say<sup>h</sup>, *Righ- h Psal. 119:*  
*eous art thou, O Lord, and iust are thy* 137:  
*judgements.*

So then be of good comfort, for  
 his affliction is not to your destru-  
 ction, but for the glory of God.

which I denyed your petition, because I  
 would haue due prooffe of your faith  
 and loue.

For, all this I did that you should  
 wel vnderstand both your own weak-  
 nes, and my goodnes<sup>i</sup>.

I know what you are<sup>k</sup>, better than  
 your selfe doth. Yea, I haue knowne  
 you thoroughly, not of late, but from  
 eueraſting<sup>i</sup>.

i Psal. 119.

67.71.

k Psal. 7.9.

1 Wi. 3.8.

Wherefore acknowledge the benefite  
 which you haue by mee; behold how  
 miserable you should be, if once I for-  
 sake you.

As yet you haue not profitted suf-  
 ficiently in the knowledge of your  
 selfe. And because it is very expedient  
 that you haue that knowledge, my  
 wil was that by experience you should  
 attaine thereunto.

It is very good for you to be for-  
 saken, to be troubled, to be humbled  
 sometime, that so the better you  
 may euen sensibly perceiue your  
 owne

## The fourth booke

m. Pla. 119. owne weakenesse.

71.

I know right well this will make you haue you a good disciple of mine. And what, I pray you, haue you lost, heereby you proue more wise and watchfull?

Oftentimes you are too arrogant and forgetfull of your selfe, thinking that goodnesse to bee within you is not; selfe-loue doth deceiue you, and while you thinke not of the giver, you doe abuse the gift. I made you drunke; but you forgot how the grape did grow vpon mine own vine.

Trie your selfe a little, acknowledge your strength. If that which you haue came of your selfe, why did you not hold it? But if you could not hold it, confesse that you receiued it from me. And therefore ascribe all the

h. 1. Cor. 4. honour to the mercy of God, and openly confesse, how without me you can doe nothing.

7. lam. 1. 7.

• Ioh. 15. 5

Consider both in what stand you, and how able also I am to confirme you in all goodnesse.

Where were you before I called you, but weltering in sin and wickedness? And now how would you wander, if I directed you not? Yea and when

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

When also went it well with you, if  
 I had not my fauour?

S. And I said, At no time, sweete  
 Lord. Thou alone art my singular  
 good friend, in all things, and aboue  
 all most faithfull.

L. Why then did you purpose so  
 wickedly with your selfe, to goe after  
 strange louers?

What misliked you in mee; was it  
 either my maiestie, or my beautie?

S. Ah Lord, there is none compara-  
 ble to thee either for beautie, or for  
 glorie, or for riches, or for authority;  
 neither in heauen nor in earth is anie  
 like vnto thee. For thou onely art  
 most hie ouer all creatures.

p 1. Kin. 3.  
 27.

The heauens are thine, the earth  
 also is thine; thou hast laid the  
 foundation of the world, and all that  
 therein is.

p Psal. 89.  
 11.

Much is it that thou hast imparted  
 vpon thy creatures, by which, thy  
 beautie, wisdom, and goodnes doth  
 appeare; but yet in comparison of  
 thy blessed and glorious presence,  
 it is nothing. So that by experience I  
 haue learned now, that I cannot lack  
 thy companie one houre together,  
 but with much grieve to my soule.

p Ro. 1. 10.

Returne

## The fourth booke

L. Returne therefore vnto me; thou hast hitherto wandered enough about.

Let not henceforth to be moued, staied, and milde, and faithfull, yea, to trust in me, not onely in the day, and my gracious visitation, but much more in the night of tentation.

I haue let you slip, that being worried, you might returne vnto me more speedily, and being frustrated of outward comfort, at length vnderstand how much you are bound vnto me, that so often haue called vnto you.

And therefore listen now at the last, for it is not without cause that sometime you are forsaken; that you are cold sometime in zeale, that irketh you, that you are ouerwearied with tentations, that on all sides you are afflicted, that you can neither finde any counsaile, nor feeling comfort, but are enforced to endure anguish and miserie at all times, and in all places.

I am absent, to the end you may know how needfull it is that I be present with you, not onely in one matter, or in a speciall cause, but in euery



Chap. 17. 245 The cross as a curse  
of the Imitation of Christ.

every action in all places & times so  
well earlie as late, wherefoener you  
shall become, goe, or stand. For this  
will teach you to walke warily with  
your friend, to abstain from vanities,  
and to take heed of offences. f Mich. 6.3.  
I do leaue you, that you may  
well vnderstand how much you are  
bound to loue mee, that is, that you  
may see a manner how to loue mee  
indeeds. It is verie true, you thought your  
selfe more stout, and happie, than in  
truth you were: but when I did once  
withdraw mine aide from you a little,  
then appeared to the world how  
you were verie poore, and mis-  
erable. How shall your loue bee knowne,  
when you beare my yoke with pa-  
tience? Sometime I see you to waxe slug-  
gish, and therefore I doe hide my  
face for an houre, like a friend stan-  
ding behinde the wall, that you  
may be stirred vp the more zealously  
to seeke me. I know for my part, and see all  
things: but troublous trials (which  
are good for many causes) doe make  
H you

The fourth booke

you the more heedie and wise in  
 ysa. 28. 19 your actions.

Moreover, if you loue mee, you  
 will not waxe the more sluggish  
 seeking mee for all this; if you  
 me, you will seeke me.

What? Wot you not, how rich  
 painefully come by, are kept mo  
 carefully? who so wisheth rest, as th  
 wearied man? Who loneth so kind  
 as he which hath sighed most heav  
 ly? And is not that iewell which  
 lost, and is found againe, much mo  
 esteemed than before it was? S  
 enen so is the ioy double, and t  
 mirth doubled, at the long with  
 presence of the beloved.

And therefore it is much for yo  
 profit that I withdraw my selfe;  
 cause I doe it, not for anie ill will  
 you wards, but vpon verie goo  
 cause: so do I dally with my friend  
 Let it suffice you at this time, th  
 you haue been in my fauour to  
 so much at my mouth.

Besides, when you haue neede  
 turne vnto me, and feare not. Fo  
 neuer shut mine eares against t  
 person which humbly and earnest  
 crieth for mine assistance.

Mat. 7. 7.  
 3.

HOY

II

ch

## of the Imitation of Christ.

## CHAP. 18.

1. The confidence of a true  
 Christian. 2. God iustifieth the vngodly.  
 giueth whatsoeuer good is to man.  
 4. will haue no man to despaire.  
 5. but that all sinners should  
 flie vnto his mercie.



Y Lord God will helpe  
 me, therefore shall I not  
 be confounded.

Isai. 50. 7.

S. Let it grieue no  
 bodie, though I loue  
 much to speake with  
 my Lord God, whose goodnes hath  
 allured, & inflamed me both to pray  
 and to meditate in such sort, that me  
 thinks, I should be too hard and vn-  
 kind, if I made none answer vnto his  
 words.

But happely some one will say  
 against mee, Therefore neither do  
 you feare God, seeing you are a foule  
 sinner, vnworthie euen to liue in this  
 world.

Whence is it that you dare so pre-  
 sume in your heart? And, being the  
 least, and vilest of all others, with

## The fourth booke

what face can you thrust forth you  
 a Eccl. 3. 15 self so to talk with your Lord God

Whom doe you make your selfe ?

Yoh. 9. 13.

Oh, my louing Lord, do thou  
 answer on my behalfe. For the  
 mouth of the wicked is opened vpon  
 me b.

b Ps. 109. 2.

If I would iustifie my selfe, mine  
 e Job 9. 20. owne mouth shall condemne mee.  
 And though I were cleane, yet did  
 not my soule know so much.

Oh Lord, thou knowest my follie  
 and my shamefastnesse. Speake thou  
 on my behalfe, and I full gladly will  
 keep silence.

L. Giue thou none heede to the  
 words of the wicked: but rather doe  
 thou remember how I haue said  
 I came not to call the righteous but the  
 sinners to repentance d.

d Mar. 2. 17.

Am not I to doe what I will e

e Mat. 23. 17

Who may resist my pleasure ?

Mar. 17. 2.

Heb. 2. 8.

If I thinke it good to shew fauour  
 to thee-ward, though little thou de-  
 serue the same at mine hands, who  
 shall reprove me therefore f ?

f Rom. 8.

33. 34.

g Ioh. 8. 7.

Hee that is without sinne, let him  
 throw the first stone at thee g. But  
 if they, all the pack of them, are sin-  
 ners, with what face can they

find

Chap. 18. 149 Gods kindnes, mans happines  
of the Imitation of Christ.

fault with my fauour to thee-ward?

You haue not chosen mee<sup>h</sup>, but <sup>h</sup>loh, 13. 16  
my mercie did preuent you.

Dareth anie yet murmure against  
you for coming vnto me? Comfort  
thy selfe, his murmure is not against  
thee, but flatly against my person,  
because it is I that receiue<sup>d</sup>, and eate <sup>i</sup> 1. Ti. 2. 13  
with sinners<sup>k</sup>. And why ought you <sup>k</sup> Mat. 23. 12  
not to challenge mine acquaintance,  
the which I reioyce to offer, rather  
than to withdraw from any one?

S. O gracious Lord, lay not this  
sin to their charge, but to me, and to  
my sins.

I cannot denie, but deservedly  
they conceiue ill of mee; yea, I doe  
openly acknowledge this withal, that  
I am much more wicked than anie  
man doth know.

L. You doe well thus to humble  
your selfe. For in so doing, you shall  
euer gaine, and more easily obtaine  
my fauour.

Notwithstanding, I will not ther-  
fore cast you away, because you are  
a sinner and faultie, albeit that should  
make you both to thinke basely of  
your selfe, and alway to haue in mind  
what great sinnes you are polluted

H 3 withall

## The fourth booke

withall. But that you perish not  
through desperation, consider how  
manie righteous men I haue made of  
sinners<sup>1</sup>, friends of enemies, choo-  
sing the humble, and refusing the  
proud<sup>m</sup>.

1 Mar. 2. 17. I haue no neede of anie gift of  
Luke 15. 1. thine<sup>a</sup>: onely this I require at your  
2. & c. hands, namely, that you loue mee  
m Lu. 7. 51. with a pure heart<sup>o</sup>; and I am satisfi-  
32. & c. ed.

1 Luke 18. 14. I am clean dashed: for alas, there  
James 4. 6. is nought within me to stirre vp your  
m Psal. 50. loue thus to me-ward.  
21. 12.

o Mat. 12. 31.

L. I do neither respect nor require  
the things that this world doth offer  
to get fauour withall; if you do loue  
and that your loue bee feruent, and  
constant, it is all that I aske.

But, I pray thee, whose are the  
things that do, or may adorn a man?  
Are not all things mine, whatsoeuer  
doe glitter either in the bodie, or

p 1am. 1. 17. minde<sup>p</sup>?

2. Cor. 4. 7. As for that of the world, and which  
set out the body, they ought little to  
trouble your minde. But the things  
which belong to the beautifying of  
vertue, it standeth you vpon to seeke  
that you may please the Lord in the  
light

ap. 18 Chap. 18 151 57 Him that loneth, God *supplicat*  
*of the Imitation of Christ.*

light of the living. 5 70 bncod 2  
Howbeit, you have well done in  
humbling, and accusing yourselfe to  
well outwardly as inwardly before  
the face of my maiesty, by confessing  
vntainedly your great weaknesse, and  
wickednesse, and by fetchng deep  
fighes, for that you are verie vnwor-  
thie to challenge the fauour of my  
familiaritie euen but one houre, be-  
ing as I am a glasse pure without  
spot, & you are a great sinner, & vn-  
cleane, euen from your infancie.

9 Wil. 7. 20  
1 Gen. 8. 21

And therefore, bee euer mindefull  
both of your fraile condition, and of  
my glorious Maiestie, and so with  
humble reuerence approach boldly  
into my presence. For I am hee that  
putteth away thine iniquities, and  
will not remember thy sins; it is I *Isai. 43. 25*  
that iustifie the vngodly: and this I *Rom. 4. 5*  
do for mine holy Name sake; yea &  
I am still readie to minister greater  
gifts of mercie vnto thee.

Because I doe euer choose to shew  
fauour rather than displeasure, as one  
who had rather spare than punish.  
Yea, all this seemeth but little to  
mine eyes, nor am I so content with  
the first grace that I will not adde

*The fourth Booke*

a second or a third rather, yea, in  
verie deepe, as I can see none end  
to my mercies: so neither can the  
number of my gifts and benefits bee  
recited.

PL. 145. 9.

PL. 68. 19.

Last of all, after that I for my part  
haue pardoned sinnes, and men for  
their parts by their goodnesse haue  
testified to the world their vnfeined  
repentance, then doe I restore for  
the most part the comfort of mine  
healthfull countenance, by pouring  
in most plentifull maner the grace of  
mine holy spirit. And although a sin-  
ner doe abide still in the flesh, yet do  
I receiue him into my familiaritie, so  
that hee is not to feare the vtter con-  
fusion for sinnes committed: but ra-  
ther to thanke and praise God, that  
old things be passed away, and that  
all things are become new.

2. Cor. 5. 17.

2. Cor. 5. 17.

2. Cor. 5. 17.

17.

So gracions and mercifull am I,  
that alwayes I am more readie to for-  
giue, than thou art to beg forgiveness  
at mine hands; more readie to giue  
than thou art to aske.

Therefore why feare you? What  
dismayeth you to approach vnto the  
side of such fauors? And why do you  
strange your selfe from so great  
kindnesse



*of the Imitation of Christ.*

kindnesse offered vnto you so frankly  
of mine owne accord?

Doubtlesse though you did cer-  
tainly vnderstand that I were purpo-  
sed to giue you the deniall: yet ought  
you not to desist from praier, nor yet  
to be out of all hope of being heard;  
but so much the more earnestly to be  
instant in crying; vntill you were  
heard. For my mercies are infinite, &  
what I denie at one time, may be  
granted fauourably at another.

How know you whether I will turn  
my face vnto you, and grant you the  
desire of your heart?

And what saith the Prophet con-  
cerning me? Approch vnto him, and  
be illightened, so shall not your faces  
be confounded.

Wherefore accuse your slow com-  
ming vnto mee, rather than your of-  
ten approaching; & rather your fear-  
full shamefastnesse, than your prompt  
presuming of forgiveness.

To hope well of my goodnesse, is a  
verie token of true humilitie, and of  
a great faith.

This doe I speake, that you may  
not offend; and that when you doe  
offend, you despaire not; but rise

H. 5 againe:

## The fourth booke

again with speede. For yet you haue  
hope, and an Advocate with the Fa-

**1. Ioh. 2. 1.** that **2. Ioh. 1. 9.** **1. Ioh. 2. 1.** **1. Ioh. 2. 1.**  
-o What? Looke you to bee all wor-  
thie before you make access vnto  
me. And of your selfe when will  
you be so? to god he to me to be

-o If only such as are good and wor-  
thie, and great, and perfect, should  
approach vnto me; to whom should  
sinners and publicans approach?

So then what saith the Gospell?  
There resorted vnto him publicans and  
**a Luk. 15. 1.** sinners to heare him. Therefore let  
the vnworthie approach, that they  
may become worthie; let the wicked  
approach, that they may bee made  
good; let the weak and vnperfected  
approach, that they may proue strong  
and perfect: yea let all and euery  
one approach, that they may receiue  
from the abundant streames of the

**b Ioh. 4. 14.** well of life. I am the well of life,  
that cannot be drawne drie.

He which is a thirst, let him come  
**e Ioh. 7. 37.** vnto me and drinke. And he which  
hath nothing, let him come and buy

**d Mai. 55. 1.** without silver, and without monie.

He that is sicke let him come to be  
**e Mat. 2. 12** healed. He that is neither hot nor

hot nor

hot

cold

*of the Imitation of Christ*

cold let him come to be inflamed f. f Mar. 9. 24.

He that is fearefull, let him come to be encouraged: he that is sorrowfull, let him come to be comforted.

He that is withered, let him come to bee fatted, he that is wearied with cares, let him come to bee refreshed with ioy. Lo, my delight is to be with the children of men g.

g Ro. 8. 31.

Hee that desireth wisdom, let him come vnto my lessons h.

h Psal. 119. 9. 24.

Hee that seeketh riches, let him come to receiue those which are eternall and incorruptible i.

i Mat. 6. 19. 20.

Hee that hunteth for honour, let him come to get an euerlasting name in the inheritance of heauen; hee that wisheth for felicitie, let him come, and hee shall taste the soueraigne, eternall, and infinite happinesse k.

k 1. Cor. 2. 9.

I, euen I it is which giueth all temporall good things l, yea and besides l James. 2. 7. that, I giue eternall riches in the heauens m. And what I promise I n Ro. 6. 23. will performe, at such time as my commandements are duly obserued. And he then shall bee crowned gloriously in heauen, that hath fought n 2. Tim. 2. 12. 11. 12. courageously in this world n.

Chap.

*The fourth booke*

## CHAP. 19.

1. The desire of a Christian Soule is  
neuer satisfied, till God be enioyed.

2. No comfort anie whit  
comparable to the  
spirituall  
ioy.



Et the meditation of  
mine heart bee accepta-  
ble in thy sight 2.

a Psal. 19. 14.

What can bee more  
comfortable, What  
more ioyfull to the faithfull Soule,  
than still deuoutly to meditate vpon  
her Lord God, that whom shee can-  
not as yet behold in a cleere, & blef-  
sed sight, at the least she may, as it  
were, make him present by earnest  
calling him into mind? Therefore let  
her behold him as in a glasse darkly<sup>b</sup>,  
whom she is not to see face vnto face.

b 1. Cor. 13.

And albeit she may not haue a full  
sight of him in his maiestie: yet let  
her search for him by types in the  
Scriptures.

Oh that the care to seek the face of  
the Lord did neuer waxe cold within  
mee, but daily more & more encrea-  
sed!

How

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

Howbeit, the soule that loueth  
God, hath a wonderfull desire to  
enioy the sight of God. For to see  
him is happinesse indeede, and the  
absolute felicitie.

c Ret. 22. 4.

Wherefore shee desireth this blef-  
sednesse, that her whole appetite, ha-  
uing attained her end, shee may bee  
satisfied, and at quiet: for nothing  
in the world is able to content her.

d Ecclu. 1. 8.

For long experience hath taught  
her, that the more she straieth from  
celestiall happines, the more vnhap-  
pie and vnquiet she is, inasmuch as in  
this world nothing is permanent, or  
durable, that may asswage the heate  
of her affection.

e 1. Cor. 7. 31.

1. Ioh. 2. 15.

16. 17.

f Gen. 1. 26.

27.

Wisd. 2. 23.

So then let her make return vnto  
him that made her; and let her de-  
sire to be blessed of him, who at the  
first created her. For doubtlesse, hee  
that made the soule, must satisfie the  
soule with good things. Because,  
such a desire hath hee instilled into  
her, that he being gone, nothing will  
content her: nor anie ioy comfort  
her greatly.

g Ps. 103. 5.

And therefore soule of mine, stand  
not here still, for this is no place of  
rest for thee: but mount aloft, as-  
cend.

*The fourth booke*

Send vnto him that made thee. For he hath now sent his messengers, and biddeth thee to ascend.

So manie desires of eternall life as he inspireth, so many messengers he doth send. Which being entertained, prepare thy selfe to the iournie.

Then goest thou on, when thou desirest to see him, when thou labourest to please him, when thou renouncest this world, when thou doest whatsoeuer thou doest, euen of pure loue to him-ward.

For had he not first sought thee, & poured holy cogitations into thy brest, thou couldst neuer seeke him.

For that soule doth languish, not for loue, but through wearinesse, which is not enlightened with the beams of the eternall Sunne.

But, if through the sweet blastes of the Southern winde, her frozen coldnesse, and sorrow be once resolved, then by reason of the light inspired, and incomprehensible diuinity, she beginneth to swear, through the hotnesse of loue.

Oh infinite heate of the true Sunne, what boilings doest thou cause then, within the heart of the louers?

## of the Imitation of Christ.

For  
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ouer? Thou dissoluest the darknesse  
of a sorrowfull minde, and bringest  
the laboursome toile vnto nothing.  
The long time and daies of pouertie  
thou doest comfort, and that abun-  
dantly, with one simple beame of thy  
glorious light.

O saluē of the sorrowfull! O shi- k Mat. 9. 12  
ning light of such as wander & seek!  
Shine thou continually vpon mee;  
prepare thou a mansion place within  
mee, euen till thine euershining light  
doth appeare.

Oh how sweet, and how comforta-  
ble will thy presence be! seeing euen  
of a little remembrance, so ynspake-  
able ioy doth arise.

How gladly can I turne vnto thee,  
how frankly doe I renounce euen  
this world, that I may be comforted  
with thy heavenly fauour!

For it will bee none hard matter  
for the soule which longeth for the  
sight of thy countenance, to bereaue  
her selfe of all outward pleasure,  
when shee shall either feele now a  
greater in the minde, or verie short-  
ly expect with a perfect faith for the  
same.

Furthermore, none is to be so foo-  
lish

*The fourth Booke*

lish as to thinke, that thou wilt haue  
the deuour soule anie long while vn-  
comforted; or that the gifts of thy  
fauour which she is to receiue for all  
her conquests ouer nature, shall bee  
small: for no earthly comfort, what-  
soeuer it bee, or whence soeuer it a-  
rise, is anie whit comparable either in  
the qualitie or quantitie of sweetness  
to the heauenly ioy.

And therefore labour thou, O faith-  
full soule, to shew thy selfe such to-  
ward thine heauenly Spouse Christ,  
that he may continually be gracious  
& saourable vnto thee; for through  
him and in him you shall in most a-  
bundant manner find that, which ex-  
ceedingly shall minister comfort vn-  
to you in all extremities.

The oftner you haue accessie vnto  
him, & the nigher you doe approach  
vnto his side, the sweeter he will ap-  
peare, and the more amiable in your  
eyes. But if you withdraw your selfe,  
then the losse will be your owne; and  
hee abiding in his beautie, shall feele  
neither grieve nor trouble.

You stand in need of his, but he of  
no mans goodnesse.

So that you may become blessed  
through



*of the Imitation of Christ.*

through him, but so cannot wee by  
your proceeding.

Hee alone suffereth himselfe; hee  
alone can neither be augmented, nor  
diminished.

Through his goodnesse all things  
are, whatsoever be, whether they  
haue life, sense, or vnderstanding.

1 Aa. 17. 28

And therefore iust it is that all  
creatures euerlastingly should blesse  
him.

m Pl. 170. 6.

Oh how gladly would I discourse  
and speake of him vnto thee, if I  
were able sufficiently so to doe!

But what? He neither is, nor may  
be vttered. Again, as hee cannot be  
vttered by meanes, so can he not bee  
conceined in minde.

Which being so, thinke notwith-  
standing of thy Creatour so well as  
man may, taking the remembrance  
of his abundant sweetnesse for a

comfort, vtill such time as hee  
reuealeth the sight of his

owne countenance  
vnto thee in the

heavens.

n Ren. 32. 4

chap.

## The fourth booke

## CHAP. 20.

1. A complaint of the Soule for the want of her blessed state. 2. What worshipping pleaseth God. 3. Who truly are blessed. 4. A description of God.

S. 7. 1. 1. 1.

a PL. 3. 1. 22.



Said in mine heart I am  
cast out of thy sight.

Mine heart is wounded within mee  
through the long deferring of thy glorie.

I will speake therefore, and reason with my griued Soule. The great zeale of loue compelleth mee to speake, and suffereth nothing to be concealed from thee. What then shall I say? Lo my God, in peace my most bitter bitterness, Hee that is ignorant, wotteth not the meaning hereof. But it is not so with me: I know, and I vnderstand it, and therefore I am not ashamed to sing with the Prophet.

b PL. 3. 1. 19. I speake to thee my Lord, who  
c Reu. 3. 15. knowest all things, and giuest both  
Eccle. 4. 2. knowledge and vnderstanding according to thy good pleasure, that  
neither

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

neither I may glorie more than is  
meete I should, nor the foole ad-  
uance mee, when in truth I am sim-  
ple.

I may confesse then what I haue  
receiued from thee. And yet what  
neede haue I to tell you thereof,  
when as you are neither ignorant,  
nor can take any pleasure of the  
same?

Againe, what comfort can come  
vnto you, which are the comfort of  
the comfortlesse?

So that the profit is mine, which  
doe lacke the consolation of words,  
thereby to stirre vp mine affection to  
thee-ward, and to finde some ease for  
my desolate soule. For, seeing I may  
not behold thy presence, I will be-  
waile thine absence, because euen  
this is a token of loue, and a great  
pleasure to the louing soule.

Now then the sense of this sen-  
tence appeareth. Because it is rightly  
said of the louing soule, how the  
more feruently she loueth, and the  
more earnestly she longeth after e-  
ternall things, the more truly she  
feeleth the power thereof working  
within her.

They

*The fourth Booke*

They are not cold words, but to the vnkinde soule; neither deafe organs, but to the hardened heart.

The louing & zealous soule knoweth this well; and is so often inflamed in heart; as shee is pricked with the desire of eternall peace.

And therefore she speaketh to thee her Lord God, not to men, of whom she would not be knowne.

And although sometime shee talketh with men: yet that which shey heare is to the outward sense. But whatsoeuer shee saith to thee, it is to the very soule, & rather by sighing of the heart, than by sounding words.

Lo (saith she) in peace is my most bitter bitternesse. As if she said; After that of thy goodnesse I returned vnto the peace of minde, the transitorie state of the world began to bee still more grieuous vnto mee. For I see in this peace, how farre I am separated from the soueraigne peace.

And indeed being first busied with earthly desires, & moued with diuers passions, I was greatly hindered from spirituall cogitations, and so from heauenly contemplation, after which I should haue much longed: but that

could

could I least of all doe, because  
through slothfulnesse I did forgo all  
sense of inward sorrow. But now see-  
ing the troubles of idle thoughts are  
taken away, I do somewhat rest in the  
peace of conscience, & am drawn vn-  
to heauenly matters with mine whole  
heart, & I do more lament, that I do  
not enioy the good things of God,  
than erst I did mourne being vexed  
with the troubles of this world.

So that it is bitternesse to my soule  
euen to liue in this world, and to  
go vnder the heauie burden of sinne.  
But it is bitterest of al, when so much  
as I may, all mine affections being  
gathered together, I doe enioy now  
the good things of the heart, & bend  
my selfe, euen with heartie zeale to-  
ward the armes of eternall peace,  
and yet may not obtaine thereunto,  
because of the bonds of my mortall  
state.

And this makes mee euen with  
griefe of heart to crie vnto thee, and  
to say; O wretched man that I am, who  
shall deliuer me from the bodie of this  
death d.

d Ro. 7.24

There is none so grieuous a burden  
vnto me, as still to wander from thee  
by

*The fourth booke*

by living in the world; for labouring  
in loue, I wish for no comfort beside  
thee.

For by good experience I haue  
long since learned, that my soule can  
neither bee satisfied with the good  
things of this world<sup>e</sup>, nor yet be blef-  
sed, vntill she be ioyned vnto thee in  
the celestiall habitation.

For as exceedingly she doth loue,  
burne, and vse contemplation while  
she is in the bodie: so will her desire  
be insatiable vntill the body bee laid  
off. And therefore her end must bee  
made perfect by attaining the soue-  
raigne felicitie, and the light of thy

countenance<sup>f</sup>.

<sup>f</sup> 1. Tim. 6.  
16.

Reuel. 1. 5.

Reu. 17. 14.

<sup>h</sup> Ps. 16. 11.

O King of heauen<sup>e</sup>, so amiable  
in all respects; O my all louely Be-  
loued, euen wholly to bee desired,  
when wilt thou fill me with the light  
of thy countenance<sup>h</sup>; when wilt  
thou satisfie my longing with the  
well of life?

My soule hath much thirsted after  
thee<sup>i</sup>, and greatly will bee troubled  
vntill she attaine thee.

<sup>i</sup> Ps. 42. 2.

Living in the world, and not see-  
ing thee, I can take no comfort of  
whatsoever I behold; so greatly  
doth

## of the Imitation of Christ.

doth zeale waxe hot, that not once,  
but often I breake into these words,  
When shall I come, and appeare be-  
fore the face of my God?

k Psal. 42.2.

And this lone of mine ceaseth not,  
but encreaseth more and more, in  
such sort, that I am driven euen to  
weepe night and day, while conti-  
nually I doe thinke with my selfe,  
*Where is now my God?*

For it is a comfort for the louing  
soule to weepe for thy sake, while she  
must want her desire, and still expect  
thy comming.

And these teares do more feed and  
refresh the louing soule, than if shee  
enoyed all the things of this world.  
For did she loue them<sup>1</sup>, shee would  
not weepe for thee.

1 Mat. 24.6.

Oh how blessed, & pleasing to thee  
is the shedding of such teares!

For they doe both kill the desires  
of secular and temporall ioyes; and  
also they obtaine the ceelestiall con-  
solation. And therefore none doe  
shed such holy teares, but they which  
are both singularly in loue, and verie  
notably religious.

Far of another kinde be the teares  
of such as miserably bee troubled in  
this

## The fourth Booke.

this world. For one man weepeth because he is sick, another for that he is oppressed, another because hee is injured, another because his minde is contrariet: but it is thou, religious soule only, which pourest forth teares even of pure loue to thy Saviour: ward: as for temporall dammage, and worldly causes; they trouble thee not, for thou submittest thy selfe to the righteous iudgement of God, and art thankfull.

m Psal. 119.  
87.

And for so doing, let no worldly creature iudge thee either foolish, or impatient: because thy teares doe not grieve but comfort; they doe not blurre the face, but wash it; they hurt not the eyes, but they purifie the sight of the minde.

Howbeit, let others conceine heereof as they will, I cannot thinke otherwise than well of you: for I doe wish to drinke deep of such teares.

5. If you wish to weepe with me, then may you bee comforted with me.

Oh that your soule were as I am! you could neuer forget what I doe feele.



*of the Imitation of Christ.*

I know whom I credit, & sure I am  
it is a more easie thing to denie that  
there is any heauen and earth, than  
that there is a God. And I know also  
he is my full happinesse, & that I shall  
neuer bee blessed vntill I haue an ab-  
solute sight of his maiestie. *Now*

*Reu. 22. 6.*

Whose sight because it is not yet  
granted me, nor alwaies assured mee,  
doth make me to lamēt, inasmuch as  
I am deprived of happinesse, wrapped  
in the darknesse of this life, & down-  
peised with the waight of mine own  
infirmity, that I am not of power to  
suffer that wonderfull sight, and that  
whatsoever I do think concerning the  
glorie of heauen, is so little, & over-  
shadowed as it were with a cloud.

*Wis. 9. 13.*

Hence it is that I double my com-  
plaint in stead of a song: and while  
they still say vnto mee, *Where is thy  
God?* my spirit is the more troubled.

*p Ps. 41. 10.*

For thus I thinke then, *where is my  
felicity? where is the full ioy of mine  
heart? where is my true peace & rest?*

Where be all the good things that  
are vspeakeable, but onely in my  
God? And when shall I enioy them,  
vnlesse I be ioyned vnto him, hauing  
nothing betweene?

*I**Yea,*

*The fourth booke*

Yea, when shall I there bee? I know not, but I beleue well; I do hope well, but yet I haue not.

Why then, where is my God, whom I loue so, and yet I see him not? through whose loue I am so often wounded; through whose absence I am so grieved; through whose gracious visitation so refreshed sometime?

Where is my God, whom euery once to see is to know all things?

Where is my God, in whom both mine heart, and my flesh doe so earnestly desire to reioyce?

Where is my God, for whose loue I suffer such paine and sorrow? His verie remembrance is sweete, but his presence is more louely, and expelleth all sadnesse from mine heart.

Where is mine hope, and my crowne? Is it not in thee my God, *9 i. Cor. 13.* and in thy blessed countenance?

92.

Oh, shew mee once thy glorie, and thy face: so will I cease to complain.

If I contend a little with thee, O blame mee not; extreame zeale of good will hath many wonderfull deuices.

I am driuen to expect, and moued

still

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

still to long; and so this ioyfull com-  
bare doth continue.

## CHAP. 21.

1. The delaying of the happie is pa-  
tiently to be borne. 2. The felicitie  
of the life to come. 3. with  
a prayer for the  
same.



Lord, I haue loued the  
habitation of thine  
house, & the place where  
thine honour dwelleth. a Psal. 26. 8

How gladly I would  
be with thee, thou knowest full well  
O my God; and how entirely I de-  
sire the same, I am not able suffici-  
ently to expresse,

I wish it not onely when I am euill  
at ease; but also what prosperitie soe-  
uer I enjoy, my desire is to bee with  
thee.

But how shall my longing bee sa-  
tisfied?

Here it grieueth me to continue b b Phil. 1. 23  
and yet of necessitie I must, but my  
desire is to be with thee, and I may  
not yet.

And therefore I see no remedie,  
I 2 but

*The fourth booke*

but that I am with patience to endure this delay, and to referre my wishing to thine holy will.

For what? Is it meet I should mur-  
mure; when it must be so? God for-  
bid: Againe, I haue the examples of  
many of Gods children which haue  
used long patience in this life, and  
yet their hearts were in heauen.

b Heb. 11.  
81. 14. & c.  
c Col. 3. 1. 2.

Therefore if thy will be to prolong  
my pilgrimage, I am willing to abide  
and obey your pleasure.

Howbeit, that with lesse grief I may  
beare my longing to be with thee, I  
will till that time still meditate with  
my selfe of that celestially habitation.

Yet I presume not to pierce into  
the least of those ioyes, which thou  
hast prepared for such as loue thee;  
but of this and that will I meditate,  
to the end that my affection being  
pressed downe and infected often-  
times, it may be stirred vp, and lifted  
into the hope of eternall blisse.

Oh that that day had once shined,  
whither then had the ioyes of heauen  
rauided me! How merry at the heart  
should I bee then, and how happie  
should I thinke my selfe!

How happie should I then bee,  
enioy-

## of the Imitation of Christ.

enjoying a continuall peace. e Rea. 1. 6

From thenceforth should I make none enquire for anie thing, seeing no secret could be hid. But my life is spent in darknesse, and therefore no maruell though my light doe dazle between the clouds of glorie.

Notwithstanding I will lift vp mine eyes, and though a farre off, behold and salute that holy Citie Ierusalem, builded in the heauen euen of liuely stones, namely of holy angels and men, replenished continually with praise and mirth, and magnifying the Lord their God for ever and euer. e Rea. 1. 10

Now therefore my soule, take vnto thee the wings of desire, and flye vpward, flye I say from all bodily senses: ascend from the visible forme of this world, vnto the holy house of God, euen vnto the new Ierusalem, builded substantially in aye, lasting peace, crowned with glorie and honour, and blessed with the abundance of all good things.

Lo, Wonderfull and vnspeakeable are the things (of heauen) which no man either can or may utter. e 1. Cor. 13. 12

No sense is able to conceiue, neither can the vnderstanding of man

The fourth booke

attaine to know, how God is in his  
Saints glorious, and wonderfull in  
maiestie

Mount thou in cogitation euen vnto  
the highest things, stretch thy desire  
into the everlasting eternitie, and

say with the Prophet: *Glorious things  
are spoken of thee, O thou of God.*

There whatsoever can be wished of

man, is had: and what is once got  
is kept without care.

God there is beheld face to face  
clearly, truly, continually, and  
eternally.

There the blessed and all glorious  
Trinitie, in one vnseparable vnitie,  
which of all the blessed Citizens of  
heauen is worshipped, praised, and

magnified, is perfectly knowne.

There is mine onely and right sin-  
gularly beloued friend,

more precious (to mee) than all ri-  
ches,

and the treasure aboue all to  
be desired, euen my Lord Iesu

Christ, the immortall Spouse of the

Church, in whom are hid (but  
yet reuealed to the Saints) from the

beginning of the world, the whole

treasures of wisdom and know-  
ledge

Combs

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

O how incoend are the Saints now  
before the face of the most Holy,  
who is the cause and spring of their  
blessednesse!

For there hee speaketh vnto them  
not in parables, but plainly of the  
Father.

Hee is their Booke, euen the word  
which in the beginning was with  
God, teaching all things and per- u Iohn 1.3.  
forming all things, so that they want  
nothing in glorie.

O blessed and euerlasting glorie,  
not of small remembrance, but all  
happie in God his presence!

There is also the most glorious.  
Mother of our Sauour, and constant  
virgin Marie, beautifying the whole  
celestiall Court with her comelinesse  
and beautie, compassed and accom-  
panied with troupes of virgins, as  
with sweete Roses and Lillies of the  
vallies.

There be the Angels and Archan-  
gels, placed in order, who most chee-  
rfully sound forth the praises of God.

There be the Patriarchs and Pro-  
phets, euen they which being fil-  
led long agoe with the holy Ghost,  
did foretell of Christ his coming,

## The fourth booke

whom now they both know, & euer  
more confesse to bee their Lord and  
Saviour, the King of kings, and per  
fect God. There they behold eye to  
eye their Redeemer, whom long  
they looked for, and for whose com  
ming they longed.

There be the Lords Apostles, and  
Disciples, those most reuerend and  
renowned Fathers, which were filled  
with holinesse and grace, and laide a  
strong foundation of the Catholike  
faith.

There especially shineth that reue  
rend man Iohn, which baptized our  
Saviour Christ, and was a speciall  
friend of my Spouse.

There is Peter, and Paul, and An  
drew, and Philip, and Thomas, and  
James, and Iohn, and all the other  
Apostles and Euangelists, pillars of  
the Church.

To keepe the faith, and to follow  
the example of these men, is the rea  
die way to euerlasting life.

Moreover, there bee the valiant  
Martyrs enriched with their proper  
blood, and euerlastingly blessed with  
Christ, whose bodies though they  
were most cruelly sleane: yet could  
not



## of the Imitation of Christ.

nor their soules by any torments bee  
seuered from Christ.

Also, there bee the noble Confes-  
sors, which contemned this present  
life, that they might be in heauen.

There bee the great and glorious  
Doctors, that were so carried aloft in  
contemplation, of which many haue  
left a lively image of holiness in their  
writings.

There be young men and maidens,  
old men and children praising the  
Name of the Lord continually, and  
ascribing the goodnesse which they  
had at anie time vnto his mercie.

There they are, I say, alway grate-  
full, alway zealous, alway iocund,  
alway religious, neuer loathing, but  
euer louing the Lord. Oh, how glo-  
rious is this Kingdome, where all the  
Saints do raigne with Christ, arraied  
with the fairest robe<sup>b</sup>, and be with-  
out care of the other<sup>c</sup>.

<sup>b</sup> Rev. 16.

<sup>c</sup> 11.

There they follow the Lambe  
wheresoeuer hee goeth<sup>e</sup>, for they<sup>e</sup>  
cannot part; but reioycing euila-  
stingly, shall reioyce in the Lord.

Rev. 7. 13.

Rev. 14. 4.

O my Soule, muse thou vpon these  
things, and cast thy thoughts vpon  
heauenly matters.

I;

Thas

*The fourth Booke*

That place indeede is an holy place, and God is in the same.

Reu. 21. 4

There is surpassing ioy & peace; good things abound, and evils there be none.

Oh if thou couldest euen a little comprehend the vnspokeable ioyes of God his Saints, then should you finde some comfort. For in mee you shall be sure to finde nothing but labour and sorrow, and tentations, and troubles of this world.

Oh that the giuer of supernall light would vouchsafe to inspire some portion of these ioyes into you, and not send you back vnto my new withering foode, but according to the riches of his superabundant mercie, purifie and ridde you of all materiall formes, and bring you, yea by force, into the depth of his eternal brightnesse.

Would to God you could carrie bathe from that heavenly sanctuarie, a form and example of true holinesse which you might imitate.

For better and more true are the examples of celestiall, and strong things, than they which are confirmed by earthly demonstrations.

There

Chap. 21. 179 God the teacher of the soules  
of the Imitation of Christ.

Therefore grant Lord, that I may  
fauour and know what the perfect fel-  
licitie of Saints is, not so much by  
written bookes thereof, as by the ho-  
ly Ghost, which teacheth of celesti-  
all secrets in such sort, as no sense of  
man is able to reach thereunto.

Grant also that from henceforth I  
may lift vp my mind more feruently  
vnto heavenly things; and amidst my  
griuous troubles, valiantly bear the  
garland of patience, till the debt of  
flesh being paid, I may attaine  
through thy mercie vnto this felicity  
that I so desire.



chap.

The fourth booke

CHAP. 22.

1. A godly meditation, concerning the accessse unto the holy of holies, euen Iesus Christ, the King of Angels. 2. Godly petitions for the forgiveness of sinnes.

a Psal. 44. 4.



Thou art my King, O God.

Arise now my soule, come, and enter into the wonderfull Tabernacle, euen into the House of God.

For it is meete that omitting other things, thou with all reuerence doe  
 b Rom. 7. 3. proceede to salute our Lord Iesus  
 c Mat. 1. 21. Christ<sup>b</sup>, thy Sauour<sup>c</sup>, & Redeemer<sup>d</sup>,  
 d Gal. 3. 13. which is the head of all principallities  
 e Rev. 17. 14. and power<sup>e</sup>; the ioy and crowne of  
 f Col. 1. 27. all Saints, the assured trust and cer-  
 g Psal. 106. 3. taine hope of all the faithfull f.  
 h Psal. 119. 73.

Hee it is which hath made s, and  
 i Isai. 53. 3. redeemed thee<sup>h</sup>; he it is which hath  
 k 1. Cor. 15. 4. for thy sake both laboured<sup>i</sup>, striven<sup>k</sup>,  
 l 1. Cor. 15. 56. &c. and overcome<sup>l</sup>.

Hee is thine Aduocate<sup>m</sup>, and the  
 n Mat. 4. 10. propitiation for thy sins.

He is thy comforter, thy prouider,  
 o Rev. 19. 16 and thy Lord<sup>a</sup>.

He

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

He is thine only & singular friend  
that feedeth among the Lillies <sup>o</sup>, and <sup>o</sup> Sal. S. 2. 16.  
loueth to rest him vpon thy breasts <sup>p</sup> Sal. S. 1. 12.

Who euer hath done the like for  
thee? who euer loued you so entirely?

Come thou vnto him, offer your  
selfe to him, open your whole heart,  
and vnfold euen your hidden secrets  
vnto him.

For no man will better either de-  
clare, or else reueale how you should  
behaue your selfe in this world, in the  
which things fall out so strangely.

Let your wishes and prayers be di-  
rected vnto him; and in him let all  
your counsailes abide.

Vaine is the hope of man <sup>3</sup>; but <sup>q</sup> Psal. 68. 9.  
he is the vpholder of peace.

Through him wee haue open ac-  
cesse vnto the Father <sup>f</sup>, and from <sup>r</sup> Eph. 2. 18.  
him wee receiue all goodnesse, and  
vertue <sup>f</sup>.

<sup>f</sup> 1. Cor. 1.

30. 31.

Whether you mourne, or whether  
you reioyce, make continuall re-  
course vnto him.

Hee is the glasse of life, the rule  
of righteousness, the light of the  
soule, the loue of shemetastusie, and  
the ioy of a good conscience.

If thou louest him, it will be none  
hard

*The fourth Booke*

hard matter for thee to despise the  
vaine pleasures of this world; if thou  
louest him, all sower things will seem  
sweet; all heauie things will seeme  
light; and that which otherwise you  
should mislike, you will like right

t Rom. 8. 37 well for his sake.

To be brieft, of him, and through  
u Rom. 11. him, and for him, are all things.  
36.

The principall end both of all our  
thoughts, and of all our actions, and  
of our speech, and of our reading,  
praying, meditating, and speculation,  
should be Iesus Christ.

Through him you attaine saluati-  
x Gal. 3. 13. on, and euerlasting life.

y Rom. 8. 35. 36. For his loue you will neither feare  
z Phil. 1. 23. to die, nor refuse to liue: because  
you are to commit your selfe wholly  
to his trust, and to preferre nothing  
before his loue, and honour.

Wherefore come neere, and giue  
thanks to thy Redcemer.

O most sweete Iesu, aboue all  
things to be loued, I salute thee most  
religiously, I commend thee most  
highly, & I blesse thee now & euer-  
lastingly with all thy creatures.

O most renowned Iesu, how can  
I praise thee as I ought? When  
shall

shall I thanke thee, as I am bound, in  
that thy mercies are so infinite to  
me-ward.

Againe, whatsoever I giue, it is  
thy gift, and I receiued it from  
thee. But little or nothing it is that  
I haue: and can I then sacrifice of  
nothing? 1. Cor. 4.

Howbeit, accept I beseech thee,  
mine humble, base, and vile sacrifice,  
and let my gifts bee ascribed to thy  
goodnesse.

Let the quires of heauenly Angels  
attending about thee, sound forth  
thine infinite praises on my behalfe:  
also let the soules of the righteous  
repeate the same.

In the meane while what shall I  
doe in memorie, and praise of thy  
most sacred name?

Much I ought to doe, & for manie  
things I am greatly bound; yet am I  
not able to performe the least.

And therefore I will read of thee,  
O my sweete Saniour, I will write  
of thee, I will sing of thee, I will  
thinke of thee, I will speake of thee,  
I will worke for thee, and for thee  
will I suffer.

In thee will I reioyce, thee will I  
praise

*The fourth booke*

praise, thee will I magnifie, thee will I glorifie.

As it is meete I will worship thee,  
b Mat. 4. 10. because thou art my God<sup>b</sup>, in whom  
I beleene, whom I doe loue, seeke,  
and haue alway desired.

Giue mee some good signe, that  
mine eyes may behold thy goodly  
countenance in the heavens.

Humbly I do throw down my selfe  
at thy feete in heart, earnestly with  
teares desiring thy fauour, that thou  
wilt vouchsafe to be good vnto me.

Write my name in thy Booke of  
life; and let that neuer bee out blot-  
ted, which thine holy hand hath  
written.

I, wretch that I am, and farre infe-  
rior to any of thy Saints, yet trusting  
boldly vpon the more than excel-  
lent prerogative of thy mercie, be-  
seech thee, that at the least wise I  
may bee counted among the basest  
and worst of thine elect.

I confesse, my life and conuersati-  
on is not such, that I dare presume  
anie thing of my selfe; and therefore  
all mine hope and comfort is, and  
resteth in the price of thy precious  
blood, wherein I doe wholly repose  
my



*of the Imitation of Christ.*

my selfe, and deeme it requisite that I should do to, together with all which I haue done, offended, deserved and omitted. And therefore behold, most gracious Iesu, my basenesse and humility, consider the affection of mine heart which I beare toward thee, not for thy merit, but for thy mercy sake, which vouchsafest to bee loued euen of the vnworthie.

In respect of mine vnworthinesse I am greatly ashamed to come in thy presence; but I am drawn on and emboldned through your wonderfull goodnesse and humilitie<sup>b</sup>, which hast <sup>b Mat. 27.</sup> in perfect good will <sup>c yee</sup> yielded not on- <sup>28. 29.</sup> ly to become man <sup>d</sup>, but also to suf- <sup>c Rom. 5. 7.</sup> fer <sup>d Ioh. 1. 14.</sup>, die, and to bee buried for my <sup>e I sai. 53. 3.</sup> sake: and therefore vnto thee doe I <sup>4. & c.</sup> make recourse, for I find no goodnes in my selfe.

Supplie that for my sake, which of my selfe I cannot performe.

Thou hast giuen mee a desire<sup>f</sup> to <sup>f Phil. 1. 13.</sup> pray vnto thee, to praise, and to bless thee: because thou art mine hope, & my portion in the land of the liuinge. <sup>g Psal. 143. 5</sup> All my desire is to be with thee in the kingdome of heauen; but insomuch as my time is not yet come, I will waite <sup>h</sup> vntill

*The fourth booke*

until the night approach. In the mean while this may bee my comfort in the place of my pilgrimage, that I am mindfull of thy name, & of thine exceeding great loue, & that I behold thee in this life by the eies of my faith.

To liue in this world, and yet to repose no trust in thee, O Lord, were a thing intolerable to my soule. I doe not consent to reioyce with the

**h Luk. 6. 23** world; and that I may not abide without ioy & comfort, I haue determined to place my ioy in thee.

**i 1. Cor. 1. 31.**

Much & often should I go astray, greatly should I be tossed in cogitations, did I not retaine thee fast in my minde, and thoughts.

And forsomuch as I am vnable to found the depth of thy diuinitie, I thinke it best for mee to turne vnto the deedes and sayings of thine humanitie; because, being in these cogitations, I swarue not altogether from thy diuinitie.

Thankes bee to thee, good Iesu, sweete and louely Iesu, for vouchsafing to become my brother, to take my flesh and bones vpon thee.

**k Ioh. 1. 14.**

**Mat. 1. 23.**

Thankes I say to thee for entering

*of the Imitation of Christ*

ring into the wombe of good Marie  
thy mother, of whose maidenly flesh  
thou tookest the holy members of  
thy body, which thou diddest vnite  
to thy diuine nature.

## CHAP. 28.

A godly prayer, and commen-  
dation of our Sauiour  
Christ.



Notwithstanding I am  
wicked, and guiltie of  
manifest sins, yet haue  
I great hope of salua-  
tion, because of thy  
suffering, and merits:  
whereof as I haue a good minde  
to confider, so grant, O my Lord  
Christ, that I may with good leaue  
so doe.

For who am I to approach nigh vn-  
to thee, vnlesse I haue licence?

I know mine vnworthinesse to  
appeare in his presence, whom the  
verie Angels doe worship with great  
reuerence, saying:

Who is this that commeth out of  
the wilderness of this world, so aboun-  
ding in pleasure?

There-

*The fourth booke*

**a** Eccles. 10  
9.

Therefore, O most blessed Saviour, I am farre vnmeet to thinke of thy glorie and honour, of thy beauty & magnificence; because I am earth and ashes<sup>a</sup>, yea more base am I than earth and ashes, because I am sinfull, and prone vnto all wickednesse.

**b** Mat. 28.  
18.  
**Heb.** 2. 8.

But thou being made higher than heauen, hast the whole world vnder thy feete<sup>b</sup>, and art worthy to be praised and honoured for euermore.

Howbeit of thine vnspokeable goodnesse, which passeth all vnderstanding, I am drawn in affection vnto thee, because thou art the comfort of the comfortlesse, and vset most willingly to helpe most miserable sinners.

I acknowledge how I am not onely destitute of all comfort, especially of thy fauour; but also verie vnable to doe good vnto my selfe.

But mercifull Iesus, wouldest thou vouchsafe to consider my basenesse, then should I both be ayded & comforted most plentifully in this my trouble.

Therefore I see well, whensoever I am compassed about with affliction and tentation, I am straight way  
and

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

and without feare to flie vnto thee?  
for where mercy is molt ready, there  
grace is in greatest plentie.

And when I haue a good minde to  
consider of thy most glorious estate,  
and to commend thee in most ho-  
nourable manner, I must come forth  
with a much purer affection, & may  
not goe forward without the condu-  
ction of Gods heavenly light.

Assuredly he shall haue no glorie,  
but shame, that presumeth without  
all reuerence to approach vnto thy  
gate.

And he which commeth thereinto,  
must proceed with all reuerence and  
humilitie, ioyned with good hope,  
that he may finde grace to be admit-  
ted.

Wherefore both humbly, and re-  
uerently, and deuoutly, and boldly I  
goe to thee-ward.

Let the godly louer of thy name  
listen then what I say.

The heauen reioyceth, the earth  
wondereth, when by faith mine heart  
saith, Christ is my Saviour.

Sathan flieth, hell trembleth, when  
my conscience cryeth, Christ is my  
Saviour.

The

*The fourth Booke*

The world waxeth vile, and the flesh humble, when as a Christian doth say, Christ is my Saviour.

Sorrow departeth, new comfort approacheth, when my minde pronounceth, Christ is my Saviour.

Slothfulnesse vanisheth, mine heart through loue fainteth, when zealously I can say, Christ is my Saviour.

Zeale encreaseth, compunction ariseth, hope groweth, comfort waxeth strong, when my soule soundeth, Christ is my Saviour.

Mine heart is ioyfull, mine affection becommeth sound, when in truth I doe say, Christ is my Saviour.

For such is the force of these words uttered of a faithfull soule, that no man is able to expresse the same in words, but still it resteth more hid and excellent, than may bee reached vnto by the wit of man.

Which maketh mee once againe most humbly to bowe my knees, ynd to thee, O blessed Saviour, and still I say, O Christ my Saviour,

O most gracious Iesu receive my prayer, and mee with it, that I may finde somewhat that may like thee well, and embolden mee, and kinde my

my zeale, and keepe mee euermore  
in continuall praising of thine holy  
Name.

Oh that for the satisfying my de-  
sire to praise, and to pray vnto thee  
from the verie bottome of my heart,  
both all my members were forthwith  
conuerted into tongues, and those  
tongues into fierie voices, that I  
might find a way to glorifie thee, my  
Saviour, world without end!

Oh that for all my sins wherewith  
I haue deserued thine indignation,  
offended grievously thy father, and  
dishonored thee, with all the hoste of  
heaven, I might once so thoroughly  
bewaile, and repent, that I might  
hereafter take a new trade of life, to  
thy glorie, and the comfort of my  
soule.

Oh that thou wouldest assist mee  
in well doing, seeing my life fraile &  
I all subiect to offending!

Oh pardon & forgive all my sins,  
either wilfully or negligently com-  
mitted, all my vaine thoughtes, my  
vngodly speeches, my abominable  
deedes!

O most gracious Iesu, I say, doe  
thou both defend mee from doing  
anic

*The fourth Booke*

anie wickednesse hereafter, and forgive, I pray thee, all my sinnes forpast: so shall I bee both more devout the more zealous, and the more careful in saying, thou Christ art my Saviour, both in mine heart, and with my mouth, in companie, and in my chamber, and in the garden, & in the field, and in all places wheresoever I shall be.

And now, what more shall I aske of thee O Christ my Saviour?

What is better, or more profitable, or more necessarie, especially for mee a great sinner, than to find favour in thy sight, O Christ my Saviour? And therefore it is that I have desired and still doe craue; even that by thine intercession and meanes, I may haue the grace of God thy Father, who, as both thy selfe hath said, and the Apostle doth witnesse, hath all power giuen thee both in heaven

*c Mat. 28. 18* and earth.

There is no praier more welcome to thee than this is, nor anie thing more necessarie for mee, than the grace and favour of God.

If I haue the grace of God, whatsoeuer else I doe want, I am rich enough



*of the Imitation of Christ.*

enough.

For what is all my endeuouring if I lacke that? Againe, what can I not doe, if I bee assisted and holpen thereby?

I see that many and diuers are my wicked affections; but yet against all passions the grace of God is a most effectuell medicine, and if once it come, it will mitigate them all.

I do also stand in need of spirituall wisedome and knowledge: but the grace of God is a most excellent teacher, & instructor of heauenly knowledge, and is able euen suddenly to instruct me in whatsoever things are necessary vnto saluation.

For to require more than is necessary, or to desire to vnderstand more than is lawful to be known, is against the will of God, whose pleasure is that we should be humbled vnder his hand, and contented with his grace.

Wherefore obtaine this grace for me, O Christ, which is so noble and precious, that indeed I ought neither to desire or craue any other thing than grace for grace.

## The fourth booke

## CHAP. 24.

A prayer for comfort vnto  
Iesus Christ.

psal. 45. 2.



Race is poured into thy  
lips.

Oh my Lord, I be-  
seech thee, at the  
length now vouchsafe  
to speak vnto mee, O

Christ. Open thy mouth in thine  
owne name, who art full of all spiri-  
tuall graces.

John. 1. 16.

I am the fountain of mercie, full  
of loue and sweetnesse.

I am the Ladder for sinners, the  
hope and pardon of the guiltie.

I am the comfort of the sorrowful,  
and the speciall ioy of all Saints.

Come vnto mee so many as loue  
me, and fill your selues at the breasts  
of my comfort, because I am good  
and mercifull to all which crie vnto  
me.

Come vnto me both righteous and  
sinners, I will sue vnto the Father for  
you; I will intreate him to bee good  
vnto you, and to fill you with the ho-  
ly Ghost.

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

I call euerie one, I looke for all, I desire to haue all to come vnto me, I despise no sinner; but with the angels in heauen I reioyce exceedingly ouer that sinner which repenteth; and so c Luk. 15. 10 commeth into the fauour of God: for no one drop of my bloud which I shed for the world; is in vaine.

Therefore come vnto mee yee sonnes of men; consider and behold my zeale for you vnto God my Father.

Lo, I haue taken his wrath vpon my selfe, I haue borne his displeasure<sup>d</sup>, yea, and continually doe<sup>d</sup> make supplication vnto him for you<sup>e</sup>, 12. & c. whom you know right well you haue<sup>c</sup> grievously offended.

Turne then, and approach, repent, and of my word you shall haue pardon.

For lo, I stand betweene heauen and earth, betweene God and sinners; and that this world perish not, I obtaine through my prayers.

Wherefore abuse not my goodness and mercie; but beware of offending, lest when you little thinke thereof, indignation be poured vpon you, and intolerable vengeance.

of Mat. 24

44.

g Rom. 2

*The fourth Booke*

I doe forewarne you as children,  
beseech you as friends, bee you per-  
fect as your heavenly Father is per-

**Mat. 5. 48** *fect be.*

Forget not mee, who haue bene,  
and am, and will be mindfull of you.

For I doe both pitie such as are in  
misericordie, and I doe entreate for those

**1 Ioh. 3. 1. 2.** *which crie vnto me.*

**S.** O gracious speech, and full of all  
comfort!

O heavenly voice, sweetly drop-  
ping from heauen to the comforting  
of sinners, and reioycing of the righte-  
ous.

O celestiall musicke, how sweetly  
doest thou resound in a desperate  
conscience!

Whence is it that the Sauiour of  
mankinde will thus talke with me?

Blessed art thou, O Christ, & bless-  
ed are the words of thy mouth. For  
honour is vnder thy tongue, & the fa-  
uor of thy speech excelleth all sweet-  
nesse. My soule was mollified, so soon  
as thou spakest, O Christ.

Behold, no sooner did thy voyce  
sound in mine eares, but my soule  
within did spring for ioy. For my spi-  
rit reuiued within mee, and all mine  
entrails

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

centrals were filled with new comfort;  
because good and ioyfull things are  
told me this day by you.

I was dolefull, but now I am iocund  
because of your words. For your  
voice is sweet in mine eares.

I was grieved and desolate; but  
now I am renewed, and made merrie.  
For thou hast sent thine hand from  
on high, and touched mee, whereby of  
weake I am become strong.

Scarce could I speake: but now I  
haue a good minde to sing, and to  
praise thee highly.

I was loth to liue, and now I am  
willing to dye, because I haue thee,  
Christ, for mine Aduocate, with the  
Father, to whose mercie I commend  
my selfe, euen from this time for euer  
and euer. For since first you began to  
speake vnto the heart of the desolate  
Orphane, I haue been changed into  
a better state, and greatly comforted  
in my minde.

I was almost at the doore of de-  
spiration, but thy comfort came and  
lifted me vp with these words.

L. What is the matter Son? & who  
are they which would hurt thee?  
Feare not, I will see vnto thee my

*The fourth booke*

sonne. I do live with God my Fa-  
 ther<sup>k</sup>, and I sit at his right hand, be-  
 ing a faithfull high Priest, and an In-  
 tercessor for thy sins!

In mee thou shouldest repose thy  
 trust, because I doe both give life<sup>n</sup>,  
 and destroy death<sup>n</sup>.

I was incarnate of a virgin in  
 time<sup>o</sup>, but of my Father begotten  
 before all times<sup>p</sup>, and when the ful-  
 ness of time came, I suffered for mans  
 saluation<sup>q</sup>.

Lo, I am the hope and comfort of  
 the godly, and by me is faith and vi-  
 ctorie attained<sup>r</sup>.

And therefore let neither mee, nor  
 these things be out of thy minde, and  
 thou wilt not feare anie darts of Sa-  
 than.

S.O happy houre! O blessed state,  
 that my Lord & Saviour will vouch-  
 safe to comfort on this wise my trou-  
 bled heart!

Oh that I might still heare thy  
 so comfortable words! for greatly  
 doe they inflame and moue mee,  
 and touch mee euen at the very  
 heart.

O blessed Christ, thou neuer cea-  
 sest to send forth the sweet milke of  
 hea-

k Rev. 1. 4.

11. Joh. 2. 1.

3.

in Iohn 11.

25.

1. Cor. 15

35.

Mat. 1. 18.

27. &amp;c.

Psal. 2. 7.

Heb. 1. 5.

Gal. 4. 4.

5.

1. Cor. 15.

37.

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

heauenly consolation! For by reason  
of the abundance of thy grace, thou  
canst not deny fauor to such as craue  
the same at thine hands, yet often  
thou shewest much mercie euen to  
the verie sinner. O Christ, thou ex-  
cellest in pitifulnesse, in mercie, & in  
louing. O Sauour, to whom none is  
to be compared, thou art aboue all to  
be loued, and to be worshipped.

O Sonne of God, by whom we are  
also the sonnes of God<sup>t</sup>, & of whom  
wee are called Christians<sup>v</sup>, thou art  
of all good men to bee serued most  
religiously, and aboue all<sup>x</sup>.

O friend of all friends<sup>y</sup>, King of  
heauen & earth<sup>z</sup>, Lord of Angels<sup>a</sup>,  
conqueror of diuels<sup>b</sup>, draw mee after  
thee, lest I fall, and so rest vnder the  
heauie burden of sin.

Poure out thy grace, send mee thy  
comfortable dewe from aboue, that  
truely I may perceiue, how thou art  
the procurer, and the open fountaine  
of all mercie<sup>c</sup>.

L. I am indeed the spring of holy  
loue, and of chaste & religious feare,  
of godly conference, and of sweete  
consolation.

Therefore when you do heare

Mat. 1. 48

Gal. 4. 6. y

A. 11. 16.

x Mat. 2. 10.

y 1. John 3.

16.

z Ren. 2. 8.

a Heb. 1. 6.

7. &amp; c.

Mark. 1. 13.

b Mat. 4. 10.

11.

Mark. 5. 7. 8.

9. &amp; c.

c 1 Pet. 3.

24. 23.

*The fourth booke*

my name, reioyce with your whole heart, and magnifie the goodnesse of your God. In honouring me, you honour the Father, which is God as I

d Iohn. 1. 1. am <sup>d</sup>. For I am Iesus the Sonne of  
2. &c.  
e Mat. 1. 18. God<sup>e</sup>: and this name shall I haue  
20. while the world endureth f.

f 1. Cor. 15. But what is Iesus? euen the Sonne  
28. of the liuing God<sup>s</sup>, the Sauour of  
g Mat. 16. 16. the world<sup>h</sup>, the King of heauen and  
h Mat. 1. 21. earth<sup>i</sup>, the Lord of Angels<sup>k</sup>, the re-  
i Pet. 1. 18. deemer of the faithfull<sup>l</sup>, & the Iudge  
k Rev. 17. 14 of quick and dead<sup>m</sup>.

Rev. 19. 16. And what is Iesus? the hope of the  
l Dan. 7. 10 godly, the comfort of the desolate,  
m Heb. 1. 6. 7. the peace of the meeke, the riches of  
n &c. the poore, the glorie of the humble,  
o Gal. 3. 13. the strength of the weake, the way of  
p Acts 10. such as wander, the light of such as  
q 43. see not, the staffe of such as walk not,  
r the oyle of such as feelee not, the stay  
s of the oppressed, the helpe of the  
t troubled, and the singular refuge of

u Mat. 11. all good men<sup>n</sup>.  
v 28. Blesse the Son with the Father, and  
w so God will blesse you.

Give honour also and glory to the Father, whensoever you praise me.

His glorie is my ioy, & my praise, is his worship.

Place



*of the Imitation of Christ.*

Place me and the Father as a scale  
vpon thine heart, and as a token vpon  
thine arme.

Therefore sit you, or stand you, or  
pray, or reade, or wright, or worke  
you, let my name Iesus and God bee  
often reuerendly in your mouth, but  
continually in your heart.

S. O grant it may be so good Iesus,  
and let all people, tribes and tongues,  
serue thee, and let all creatures bow  
at thy presence.

Let heauen say, Reigne thou Iesus,  
let the earth make answer, yea, for  
euer and euer let him reigne.

Yea, let all Saints confesse thy glo-  
rious Name, and all good people re-  
ioyce before the Father, and thee his  
lambe, and our Lord Iesus Christ,

Amen.

o Ioh. 1. 29.  
p Rom. 3. 7.



The fourth booke

CHAP. 27.

That for God his benefites wee are  
to thanke him.

2 Pm. 72. 19  
hloh. 20. 37



Blessed bee the glorious  
Name of the Lord for e-  
uermore.

O Lord my God,  
let all my doings, all  
my reading, all my writing, my  
thoughts, words, and vnderstanding,  
tend vnto the aduancement of thine  
honour.

e 1. Col. 10  
27.

Yea, let me both begin my business  
in thy Name, and goe forward in thy  
feare, and finish it with thy blessing.

That which thou hast giuen, that  
receiue againe; and from whence the  
streames doe flow, thither let them  
returne.

It neuer goeth better with me, nei-  
ther doth it relish better to my soule,  
than when vnfaignedly I doe ascribe  
all to thee, whatsoeuer I haue either  
done or thought as I should.

My desire is to render thanks:  
which I then doe as I ought, when  
for that I haue receiued, and thou  
hast giuen, I ascribe all praise to thee,  
and

## of the Imitation of Christ.

and nothing to my selfe. For what  
can I, a wicked and vnprofitable ser-  
uant, render vnto thee my God? Alas,  
all that I can doe, yea, if I should doe  
all which thou commandest to bee  
done, it is to none effect.

So that I am brought vnto no-  
thing, and rightly humbled. And in-  
deede it is very well that I am so  
brought downe, that thou alone  
maiest bee iustified, and haue the  
praise of all, and that vile dust & may  
at no time glorie in it selfe.

d Lu. 71.10

e Pl. 119. 71

f Psal. 51. 4

g Eccles.

10. 9.

Howbeit, I minde not to surceasse,  
but will extoll thee both with heare  
& mouth. For albeit I discharge not  
my duetie therein as I ought: yee  
ought I to speak of thy goodnes, and  
not to be silent.

O my God, thou art my glorie,  
my praise shall alwaies be of thee.

h Psal. 7. 6

He that would but a little consider  
of thy glorie, and know what in is to  
glorie in the Lord, how would hee  
despise all outward glorie.

i Ier. 9. 24

Hee that would, euen but a little,  
taste of thy sweetnesse; how quickly  
would hee loath, as most bitter, the  
pleasure of this world.

Hee that would receiue euen but  
a small

*The fourth booke*

a small sparkle of loue into his breast, how would hee burne in affection! For full gladly would hee contemne all things to haue thy friendship: and would count it all sweete and easie to bee borne, whatsoever he should doe, or suffer for thy

**Rom. 8.** loue sake.

35.

Hee that would consider in his minde thy goodnesse to man-ward, how would he reioyce and run after thee! Hee would seeke nothing so charily, he would keepe nothing so warily, he would pursue nothing so eagerly, as to serue thee. For in louing, he would feele no burden, because loue would bear all burdens.

**1 Gal. 3. 6.**  
7.

So then they which complaine of the burden, doe plainly declare how they haue little true loue in them.

To serue of loue, is of all others the greatest pleasure, and comfort in labour.

True loue doth neither respect commodity, nor feare damage, but in all things seeketh that which may please thee.

Oh Christ, how sweet is thy loue, how well doth it sound, how sweetly doth it enter, how strongly doth it binde!

Oh.

*of the Imitation of Christ*

Oh that it would fast binde mee  
to thy continuall seruice ! Oh that it  
would wholly take mee, and wholly  
subdue mee, and wholly and altoge-  
ther make me to be thine !

For then, and not before am I free,  
when I am taken of thy loue, and vt-  
terly deprived from all that mine is.

O my Lord, I am thy seruant<sup>m</sup>, yea  
thy seruant am I, because thou hast  
redeemed me<sup>n</sup>. I am thy seruant with  
a verie good will, and am not asha-  
med to be properly thine.

m Psal. 143.

12.

n 1. Cor. 6.

20.

1. Cor. 7. 13

1. Pet. 1. 19

I wish not to bee mine owne man  
again: and therefore, Lord, helpe  
mee, that I may bee freed from that  
which naturally is mine.

Oh blowe and kindle, and inflame  
the fire of my zeale, so shall mine  
heart boile, and become pure, cleare,  
and pleasant: for thy loue expelleth  
vice, and consumeth sin.

Lay thou fast hold vpon the band  
of loue, and I shall stand and conti-  
nue in thy seruice.

Full well I wot, no good can my  
seruice do you, Lord; but all the be-  
nefit redoundeth to my selfe, if I doe  
that which I know is acceptable in  
thy sight.

Would

*The fourth booke*

Would I did, and hid not, that I re-  
uealed, and concealed not thy works,  
Lord.

When shall I bee able worthily to  
consider the manifold benefits con-  
ferred vpon mee of God? Mercifully  
hast thou dealt with thy seruant O  
Lord; but alacke, I neuer thanked  
thee for the same, as thou deseruedst.

And therefore am I punished, and  
pinched at the verie heart, euen be-  
cause I am vnable to answer thy be-  
nefits so great and so manifold.

Oh that I could euen but once  
worthily, and thoroughly thank thee  
for all these things!

But what may proceed from him,  
in whom nothing is? An emptie ves-  
sell can minister no drinke.

What then shall I doe? Something  
I must giue. For it is not lawfull to  
come before G O D with an empty  
hand; Because the Lord abhorreth  
the vngratefull man.

Oh, that I could finde something  
in this world to giue you, that might  
be acceptable in your sight!

Oh my Lord, whom in heart I  
loue, what would you that I should  
giue you?

As

• Eek. 17.

27.

Chap. 29) 207 God is goodnesse  
of the Imitation of Christ.

As for any good thing of mine  
you neede it not. And why then p Ps. 50. 12  
exact you a gift of mine hands? For  
riches, none is comparable to you,  
& yet require you somewhat of me?

L. That which I demand is euen  
your selfe wholly. For so it is expe-  
dient if you would purchase my fa-  
uour.

I will giue grace to you, and you  
shall shew grace to mee; and so  
loue shall bee continued betweene  
vs.

Giue mee your selfe; and you haue  
giuen euen all.

S. O good Iesus, the fountaine of all  
goodnesse, the fountaine of life, the  
fountaine of grace, the fountaine of  
sweetnesse, the verie fountaine of aye  
lasting wisdom, poure vpon mee  
euen at this instant, I beseech thee,  
the gift of thy celestiall grace, and  
teach me to be gratefull, and to giue  
my selfe before all things wholly  
vnto you; for this is the dearest thing  
that I can render.

This I do know, and acknow-  
ledge. Therefore receiue mee: lo, I  
am wholly thine, and all that mine is,  
is thine.

Onely

*The fourth booke.*

Onely one thing there is which I cannot giue; & that is my sin, which is mine indeede properly, and therefore not to be imputed vnto thee.

Sin mine is, and all defaults within me are to be ascribed to me only; but glorie, and for all thy benefits thanks, be vnto thee.

But now in calling thy benefits into mind, of many I gather only a few, and those which do most of all moue me, & appeare in my mind. For neither will the time suffer to recite, neither can my thoughts comprehend

q<sup>i</sup>. 1. Cor. 2. them all.

9.

Because for number they are infinite, for greatnes incomprehensible, and inestimable for goodnesse. For bought they cannot bee, because  
r Mat. 10. 8  
1am. 1. 17. they are freely giuen. And therefore onely thanks bee required for  
s Mat. 25. 28.  
t Mat. 4. 10 them, otherwise all shall be taken away, as from that vngratefull one.  
u Ioh. 1. 1.

2. 3.

First therefore & afore all things, I  
Col. 1. 15. thanke thee, O Lord my God, creator of all things, for making mee  
16. 17. a man, after thine image and similitude, and for placing mee over the  
x Gen. 1. 27  
y Psal. 119. 73 workes of thine hands.  
z Psal. 8. 6.

2. &c.

This is the great and first benefit bestowed



Chap. 25. 209 The first benefit of God on man  
of the Imitation of Christ.

bestowed vpon mee, and that of thy  
meete goodnesse.

For I made not my selfe, but thine  
hands did fashion me<sup>z</sup>, they brought  
mee into this world through my pa-  
rents<sup>a</sup>, whom thy will was, should  
serue thee herein.

<sup>z</sup> Psal. 100.3

<sup>a</sup> Psal. 139.  
13.15.&c.

And lo, I am better than other cre-  
atures, exalted aboue the beasts of  
the field, and birds of the aire<sup>b</sup>, in  
that I am fashioned after thine im-  
mage<sup>c</sup>, indued with eternall wisdom,  
and naturally participate of the light  
vncreate, and of the vnchangeable  
truth. Wherefore for my being, living,  
and vnderstanding, I giue thee euer-  
lasting praise, wishing and desiring  
herewithall, that all creatures both in  
heauen and earth, may euerlastingly  
commend thy glorious and most ex-  
cellent name.

<sup>b</sup> Gen. i. 28.

<sup>c</sup> Wisd. 9.2.

<sup>c</sup> 1. Cor. 11.

7.

I blesse thee, O Father, Lord of  
heauen and earth<sup>d</sup>, who of nothing  
through thy onely begotten Sonne  
Iesus Christ in the holy Ghost, hast  
created all things<sup>e</sup>.

<sup>d</sup> Psal. 97.1

<sup>d</sup> Psal. 99.1.

<sup>e</sup> Iohn 1.3.

Yea al things thou hast made, not of  
necessitie compelled, but of pure and  
speciall loue moued therunto, thereby  
to shew thy power vnto the sonnes of  
men,

<sup>2.3.</sup>

<sup>Heb. 1.2.</sup>

*The fourth booke*

**¶** *Pla. 145. 4* men f; and by thine inuisible and coeternall wisdome with thee, thou hast most perfectly disposed this visible world. Let all thy creatures subiect in all things to thee, & ordained for the vse of man, blesse thee.

**2** *Wisd. 9. 1*

**1** *Mat. 28. 18.*

**1** *Gen. 1. 28.*

For at thy commandement both raine falleth from heauen, and fruit springeth from the earth.

**2** *1. Cor. 13. 12.*

**1** *1. Cor. 13. 12.*

**1** *1. Cor. 13. 12.*

The Sunne shineth brightly in the day time, the Starres giue light by course in the night.

The fountaines spring, the rivers flowe, and fishes of diuers kindes doe swimme.

The birds not onely flye, but sing also, and the goates, the colts, and Harts, doe spring vpon the mountaines.

The sheepe and other cattell, doe ioy in good pasture, and diuers other liuing creatures doe run about the groanes.

The ground waxeth greene, the fields prosper, and trees of the wood do yeeld both boughes and fruit.

**¶** *Ps. 72. 18.* O Lord, which only doest wonderful things, euen all these are thy workes.

Another benefit which thou hast bestowed

ap. 25 Chap. 25. 211 The second benefit of God on man  
of the Imitation of Christ.

bestowed vpon me, is the mysterie  
of incarnation<sup>1</sup>, the worke of my<sup>11. Ti. 3. 16.</sup>  
redemption, the price of our salua-  
tion, euen the fruit of thy passion and  
death.

Oh great worke of mercie! Oh  
worke of most excellent loue<sup>m</sup>,  
most abiect humilitie<sup>n</sup>, of most rare  
patience<sup>ol</sup>. No man could merite, nor  
Angell procure this thing.  
<sup>m Rom. 5. 2  
n Phil. 2. 5  
& c.  
o 1. Pet. 2.  
21. 22. & c.</sup>

The Prophets haue wondered at  
it, the Apostles haue seene & taught  
it, the faithfull haue embraced it, and  
the elect specially doe loue, and call  
it into minde.

The due consideration of this be-  
nefit stirreth vp good desires, infla-  
meth the heart, nourisheth deuotion,  
inlighteneth the minde, purgeth the  
affection, draweth on to heauen-  
ward, withdraweth from the world,  
driuerth vnto God, and vniteth the  
soule with Christ.

This benefit farre excelleth the a-  
boue mentioned: yet there is one  
which gaue each, and hath bestowed  
both of them vpon vs, euen our Lord  
Iesus Christ.

For what the better had I been for  
my life, if I had not been redeemed  
with

*The fourth Booke*

with the precious blood of my Saviour Christ?

p Gal. 1. 3.  
13.

Therefore the grace and mercy of God grew vpon mee, and plentiful redemption was made: for the corrupted nature of man without the aide of God his maker, could neuer haue been repaired.

O Father of mercies, and God of  
p 2. Cor. 1. 3. all comfort, thou to redeeme thy  
f Ephes. 2. 3. damned seruant, hast giuen thine  
t Ro. 8. 32. only Son to the death.

O wonderfull kindness of thine to vs-ward, vnto which, neither the wit of man, nor the vnderstanding of  
u 1. Tim. 3. 16. Angels can attaine. But alone, sweete Christ, thou art the beginning and the end of our saluation, & alone couldest help the miserable, & damned, thou alone art priue to the same. For thou didst vouchsafe to appeare vnto the world in the likenes of a most vile seruant; and for mortall  
x Phi. 2. 5. 6 wormes euen of meere pittie receiuedst with a willing mind the iudgement of a cruell death.  
y Eccle. 10. 9.  
z Gal. 1. 13.

O good Iesus, thou which art the fountaine of mercie, the light of aye lasting glory, the pure glasse (without spot) of God his maiestie, kindle mine

Chap. 25. 213 The second benefit of God on man  
of the Imitation of Christ.

mine heart with the meditation of  
this vnspeakeable benefit bestowed b Rem. 5.  
vpon me, and vpon all mankinde b. 13. 16. & c.

But this, as was the former, is gene-  
rall, (sufficient to saue all, but not effe-  
ctuell in all, by reason of the incredu-  
litie and malice of many: howbeit it  
saueth, & is profitable to all the elect,  
for whose sake all things were crea-  
red; and be (as I may say) created a-  
gaine, through thee my Sauour.

O good Iesus, how manifold are  
the benefits brought vnto vs by thine  
humanitie!

Thou becamest our brother, & flesh c Iob 1. 14.  
of our flesh, that we might be coun- d Gal. 4. 6. f  
ted the children of God, & haue ac-  
cesse vnto the Father, through thee, e 1 Iohn 2.  
the fire of whose displeasure none 1. 4  
could quench, but thou alone of 6 Mat. 3. 17  
whom himselfe did say f: This is my  
beloued Son, in whom I am wel pleased. Mat. 17. 5.

Happy is the soule, which earnestly  
recordeth, and heartily loueth, and  
worthily extolleth the Sacraments  
of our redemption; and for them  
thanketh thee: and finally depen-  
deth vpon thy counsell, more than  
vpon her owne sense.

For none is meete to search out, no

wile-

The fourth Booke.

wisedome can reach into this myste-  
rie; onely it is the strength of beliefe,  
and the purenesse of the heart lighte-  
ned from aboue, that beholdeth the  
same. Oh, blessed is he that is wor-  
thie to receiue that by grace, which  
the wise of the world could not vn-  
derstand by nature h<sup>1</sup>.  
Mat. 11. 35. O sweete Iesu, the wisdom of the  
Father, make mee in the light of  
faith to know this great and won-  
derfull mysterie of thine Incarnati-  
on<sup>1</sup>, for therein the sweetnesse of  
our whole saluation lyeth, and there-  
by the rarest friendship that euer  
was seene appeareth<sup>k</sup>, and through  
it, the vnsearcheable fulnesse of thy  
wisedome, glittereth most glori-  
ously.

Oh let thy seruant grow on still  
in godliness, in the study of well do-  
ing, and more and more in the me-  
morable secret of thine Incarnation,  
make mee acquainted with the my-  
sterie of thine holy passion, and draw  
mee wholly into the meditation of  
thy worke!

The declaration of this loue, and  
humilitie, is a wonderfull deepe, and  
a certaine celestiall sea, which may  
not

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Chap. 25. 215 The second benefit of God on man  
of the Imitation of Christ.

not be soone ouer, wherein do swim  
to and fro the spirituall fishes both  
small and great, which thou hast ta-  
ken within the net of faith.

Wherefore let this thy so great  
loue and sweetnesse, thine so great  
humilitie and kindnesse abide still in  
my remembrance; let it alway re-  
maine in euerie sacrifice of prayer  
that I am to make, and in all mine  
holy exercises let there be somewhat,  
as pleasant frankincense, & delight-  
full spices, for a sweet smelling saour  
to bee offered vnto God the Father,  
concerning the mysterie of thine In-  
carnation and Passion.

Let now then such as thou hast  
redeemed, I say, whom thou hast  
redeemed out of the hand of the e-  
nemie<sup>1</sup>, sing out with mee the song <sup>1 Luk. 1. 74.</sup>  
of thine heauenly praise, & of inward  
ioy together with thanksgiuing.

Yea let all the Angels standing a-  
bout thy Throne, fall vpon their fa-  
ces, and worship the Lambe of God,  
who hath taken away the sins of the  
world<sup>m</sup>, saying<sup>n</sup>: <sup>m Ioh. 1. 29.</sup>  
<sup>n Rcu. 7. 13</sup>

Praise, and glorie, and wisdome,  
and thanks, and honour, and power,  
and might, bee vnto our Lord Iesus  
Christ

*The fourth Booke*

Christ for euermore, Amen.

A third benefit not inferior to the former, is the grace of iustification, whereby of thy goodnesse thou hast drawne me vnto repentance, and amendment of life, forgiving my sins, and giuing me both hope of pardon, and willingnesse to doe well, and to serue thee euermore.

This, after Paul duly had considered, he adhorteth his Disciples to be both thankful for so great a benefit, and also mindefull of the heavenly grace, & to study to shew themselves worthy so spirituall a calling: Brethren, saith he, you see your calling how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. These things I consider in my selfe, who notwithstanding I am contemptible, and vnmeet for this world: yet by thine holy calling am I saued from the shipwrack of the same, to thine holy seruice. And this I ascribe wholly, not vnto any goodnes of mine, but vnto thy prouidence.

For the which I extoll thy goodnes, & blesse thee, euen I say, for calling.

• 1 Cor. 1.  
26.27.



ap. 35 Chap. 25. 217 The third benefit of God on man  
of the Imitation of Christ.

ling mee graciously, for giuing me a  
desire to please thee, for pardoning  
all my sins; for putting me vnder thy  
sweete yoake, softening mine heart  
with the oyle of thy spirit, whom  
the world neither knoweth, neither  
seeth, nor sauoureth.

O mercifull Iesu keepe me in this  
minde, I beseech thee, encrease thy  
gifts of grace within mee more and  
more, so long as I remaine in this vi-  
sible light.

I perceiue right well this calling  
of mine is a great benefit, not giuen  
to all men, but onely to such as God  
the Father hath ordained thereunto:  
because it is not in him that willeth,  
nor in him that runneth; but in God  
that sheweth mercie <sup>p</sup>, that euerie <sup>p</sup> Rom. 9.16  
mouth may be stopped <sup>q</sup>, and all the <sup>q</sup> Rom. 3.19  
world culpable before God; & that  
no flesh should reioyce in thy pre-  
sence <sup>r</sup>, nor ascribe any of their owne <sup>r</sup> 1. Cor. 13  
vertues or good works to themselves. <sup>29.</sup>

For if thou shouldest deale with  
mee in iustice, alas, I were then dam-  
ned with the cursed spirits in hell.

But of thy goodness, O Lord, thou  
hast spared mee, and forgien my  
sins, wherby I am not as the childe.

L of

*The fourth booke*

of perdition. And therefore am I bound to render great thanks vnto thee for so excellent a benefit: and would to God, both in my speech, & in my life, all the daies of my life I might answer my calling.

But Lord, in stead of all thanks, receiue, I beseech thee, my poore seruice, whereby I desire, and indeed am bound to serue thee.

Grant also that the debt of my seruice may proceede from the heart, and finally agree to thy will and honour; and that mine heart bee neuer turned from thy loue, but that both my soule and bodie may alike watch and perseuer day and night in thine holy seruice, euen so long as life is within my bodie, and I haue my wits to remember thee; let thy praise be neuer out of my mouth, nor the remembrance of thy manifold benefits slip out of mine heart.

And if thy seruant shall yet liue manie yeares, either an hundred, or how many soeuer, grant, that I may not proue luke-warme, or abashed at thy seruice, but bee euen so zealous, & so willing to serue thee, as I was at the first houre and day  
when

Chap. 25. 219 The third benefite of God on man  
of the Imitation of Christ.

when mine heart was admonished & confirmed of thee, euen with a pure and whole mind only to follow thee my Lord.

Neither let anie infirmitie or aduersitie hinder my purpose; but euen as now I meane, and purpose in the hearing of thee my God: so I beseech thee giue grace, that what now I haue promised, I may performe.

And although through my infirmitie and faults, this my course shall be broken, as there is no man so righteous vpon earth but he sinneth; yet f 1. Chro. 6. suffer me not to despaire, and to faint 36. vtterly, but put into my minde forthwith to bow the knees of mine heart, and with much sorrow and teares to offer vnto thee my wofull and wounded conscience to bee healed with the salue of thy mercie, and that my purpose may bee bound more surely than euer it was.

Let mee neuer repent me of this couenant, but still giue thanks, that I haue found such fauour in thine eyes as to bee accepted into thine holy warfare.

Thou canst, O almightie, and all 1. Exe. 10. 9.

L 2 mercifull 2. Cor. 6. 18

*The fourth booke*

**W**is. 12. 20 mercifull God ⁊, who hast of no-  
**2. Cor. 13.** thing created mee ⁊, and foreseest  
**⁊ Gen. 1. 26** the fall and infirmity of man; thou  
**Ps. 100. 3.** art able, I say, and that thou wilt I  
 beseech thee, forgiue the sins which  
 I haue committed, supply what I  
 haue omitted, restore what I haue  
 lost, heale what is sicke, cleanse what  
 is vncleane, lighten what is darke,  
 assuage that which swelleth, inflame  
 what is quenched, repaire that is  
 broken, recouer that is neglected,  
 amend what is awrie, make plaine  
 what is rugged, restraine what is cu-  
 rious, call home that which wan-  
 dereth, place what is out of order,  
 yea and alter the whole state of  
 my minde, that nothing be wanting  
 to my former purpose, and let all  
 occasion of euill, worke for the best  
 vnto mee, I most humbly desire  
 thee.

This change is made by the  
 right hand of God; this is God his  
 visitation; this is the manifold  
 conference of the diuine good-  
 nesse.

In stead of all thanks, accept  
 the deuout seruice of thine holy  
 Church where-so-euer, with she  
 sweete

Chap. 29. 221 The third benefit of God on man  
of the Imitation of Christ.

Sweete praises of the whole Court of  
heauen.

And let all the Saints from the  
beginning of the world, which  
through thy grace haue been enligh-  
tened and called, yea & all the faith-  
full and Christian people which ei-  
ther bee in the world, or haue been  
afore vs, or shall liue hereafter, let  
them I say together celebrate and  
praise thy all sweete and glorious  
Name, which is aboue all names to  
be blessed ⁊.

⁊ Phil. 2.9.  
10.

Let them repeate againe, and a-  
gain with great ioy, repeate all  
praises duely and deseruedly to bee  
said of thy Name: and that so ma-  
nie times, as there bee either in the  
heauen starres; or in the sea fishes; or  
in the earth corners; or in the Bible  
letters.

And all this being done, yet must  
I say, they haue not praised thy  
Name sufficiently, the which I de-  
sire to commend euen to the ve-  
termost of my strength, and by all  
meanes to extoll, vntill I attaine vn-  
to those prayes, which now cannot  
bee expressed by the voice of mortall  
men.

*The fourth booke*

So that thou seest now my Soule,  
the greatnesse and the excellency  
of God thy Creatour and Redeemer  
his benefits, the which no creature,  
nor all creatures may recompence,  
whom hee hath made vnto the praise  
and glorie of his eternall and blessed  
name <sup>a</sup>, who needeth no glory, but  
is alone all-sufficient for himselfe, he  
that is what hee is <sup>a</sup>, is his owne  
glorie.

The number of his benefits were  
so great, that I could not place them  
all before mine eyes; and therefore  
of a great manie I chose three pre-  
cious gifts, euen as the Wisemen  
did, which were about to offer to  
thee Lord <sup>b</sup>, wherein I thought good  
to comprehend the rest.

For euerie benefit of God, if you  
marke well, is either of nature, or of  
grace, or of superexcellencie: and  
whatsoever else is, may fully bee  
referred vnto one of these three  
kindes.

In the Creation, you haue the be-  
nefit of nature; in the Redemption,  
the benefit of superexcellencie; in  
our Iustification, note the benefit of  
grace.

For

Chap. 27. 123 The third benefit of God on man.  
*of the Imitation of Christ.*

For all which, and for euerie of  
them, glorie bee to thee, O sacred  
Trinitie, one equall Deity, both  
before all worlds, now  
and for euermore,  
Amen.

c Ren. 170  
10.

FINIS.

23 AP 57

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A

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**A Table of the con-  
tents of euery Chapter**  
contained in this  
Booke,



Longing of the Soule after  
God. The incomprehen-  
sible maiesty of the Lord.  
An exhortation to the  
loue of God. Chapter 1. Page 1

Of God his distinct iudgements at  
the end of the world. The cursed  
state of the vngodly. Chapter 2  
Page 14

An humble confession of finnes;  
with a prayer for grace to repent.  
Chap. 3. Page 19

Lamentation of the Soule for her  
weaknesse & vnstaidnesse in the race  
of vertue. Chap. 4. Page 25

Of the shortnesse and miserie of  
this present life. A prayer for grace  
to renounce the world, and the vani-  
ties of the same. Chap. 5. Page 30

An ardent desire of the Soule to be  
loosed from sinne, and from the  
troubles of this world. Chapter 6  
Pag. 37

A godly desire for a good death.  
Chap. 7. Page 44

A meditation of one dead vnto  
the



*The Contents of this booke.*

the world, yet aliue in Christ. Chap-  
ter.8. Pag.51

A desire of the Soule, that no earth-  
ly creature may carry her away vnto  
vanity. Chap.9. Pag.59

A comparison between earthly &  
heauenly ioyes; with a praier for  
grace to contemne this transitorie  
World. Chap.10. Pag.63

That all comfort and pleasures are  
in God. A praier that all people may  
glorifie the Lord. The blessed state  
of good men. That we are to be ready  
against the comming of our Sauour  
Christ. Chap.11. Pag.71

The desire of the Soule after God.  
The properties of God by the sundry  
titles ascribed vnto him. None com-  
meth vnto God, vnlesse God draw-  
eth him. Chap.12. Pag.80

How, and when the Soule and God  
are vnited together. The miserie  
where God is not present. Chap. 13  
Pag. 92

A lamentation of the Soule for  
the want of grace. Chapter 14  
Pag. 101

Touching the fruit of friendship.  
The benefits of Christ vpon man.  
The true felicitie and ioy of the  
Soule. The affinity between Christ  
and

## *The Contents of this booke.*

and the soule of man. Chap. 15

Pag. 107

The more we loue Christ, the more we may. Tentation, and when. Happi-  
ness of the life to come. How to bear  
affliction. Chap. 16

Pag. 118

The maieftie and omnipotencie  
of God. How, and why the Lord af-  
flicteth his children. Chap. 17

Pag. 133

The confidence of a true Christian,  
God iustifieth the vngodly, Giueth  
whatsoeuer good is to man, Will  
haue no man to despaire, but that all  
sinners should flye vnto his mercie.

Chap. 18. Pag. 147

The desire of a Christian Soule is  
neuer satisfied, till God bee enioyed,  
No comfort any whit comparable to  
the spirituall ioy. Chap. 19

Pag. 156

A complaint of the Soule for the  
want of her blessed state. What wee-  
ping pleaseth God. Who truly bles-  
sed. A description of God. Chap. 20

Pag. 162

The delaying of the happie is pa-  
tiently to bee borne. The felicity of  
the life to come: with a prayer for the  
same. Chap. 21. Pag. 171

A

*The Contents of this booke.*

A godly meditation, concerning  
the accesſe vnto the Holy of holies,  
euen Ieſus Chriſt, the king of angels:  
godly petitions for the torgiueneſſe  
of finnes. Chap. 22. Pag. 110

A godly prayer and commendation  
of our Sauour Chriſt, Chap. 23  
Pag. 187

A prayer for comfort vnto Ieſus  
Chriſt. Chap. 24. Pag. 194

That for God his benefits we are  
to thanke him. Chap. 25. Pag. 202

**F I N I S.**



23 AP 57

